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THE WIRE

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A GIANT STEP

WE Have Made It! After two years of some-
times tenuous existence as a quarterly, *The
Wire* has taken the inevitable step and gone
monthly.

This has come about largely as a result of
becoming part of the Namara Group which
also includes Quartet Books. This does not
mean that we have been bought out, merely
that *The Wire* is now jointly owned by
Namara and Chrissie Murray and myself.

What it does mean, however, is that the
country's most important jazz magazine and
book publishers are now stablemates which
will have far-reaching advantages for jazz
publishing in this country. After years of
neglect and decay, jazz journalism and de-
bate will be able to rise to the same heights
which the music itself is currently experienc-
ing in popularity. *The Wire* as a monthly will
have a louder voice and exercise a greater
influence in the jazz world.

Our editorial policy will continue to be
wide with a major emphasis on the here and

now and its many styles. We will also place
great importance on helping to initiate the
newcomer into the world of jazz and related
music in a way which is comprehensible.

We are impressed by the other leading
European magazines, *Jazz Hot* and *Jazz
Magazine* in France, and *Musica Jazz* in Italy.
Like them, we will touch on music which falls
just outside jazz but which is, nevertheless,
relevant so don't let anybody tell you we are
not a jazz magazine.

I would like to take the opportunity of
welcoming Chrissie Murray as the first
woman jazz editor in the world after having
given us much needed expertise and support
over the last two years as sub editor.

I would also thank you, our loyal readers,
especially subscribers, for having gone this
far with us. And, to the mass of new readers, I
will just say **HANG ON TIGHT BECAUSE WE'RE
GOING TO MOVE FAST...**

Anthony Wood

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MONDAY 16th OCTOBER • 7.30

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SAKIS PAPADIMITRIOU
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SHORT STRANDS

BBCTV's Arena special, 'The Long Night of Lady Day', has finally been scheduled for 2 November. The rumour that, after seven years of preparation, it wasn't ready for the Billie Holiday anniversary (17 July) was rather disproved by its showing on New Zealand television on that very day and, since then, on Telefeis Eirann.

What UK viewers have to wait for is merely the return of Arena after its summer(?) break. The same delay, therefore, caused the BBC's Jazz on a Summer's Day weekend's mutilation of the historic *Sound of Jazz* film, which had its Holiday sequence looped out. This indefensible decision can hardly have created as much anticipation for the documentary as showing *Sound of Jazz* complete would have done. But 'Long Night' director John Jeremy is convinced that all will be forgiven when the clip is seen as the climatic centrepiece of his 100-minute special.

Brian Priestley

BUSY bassists Bill Laswell (also super-producer) and Jamaaladeen Tacuma (ex-Ornette Coleman/James Blood Ulmer) are collaborating on a special twelve-inch release for Celluloid. Working together under the name — wait for it... Bass Invaders, the dynamic duo will be using only bass guitars and rhythm machine. Sounds interesting but hardly solves the worldwide musicians' unemployment problem.



Devoted to Duke

THE THIRD International Duke Ellington Conference (previously held at such glamorous locations as Chicago and Washington) will take place in exotic Oldham, Lancs, next May (24-27).

Promised are three evenings of concerts, rare films and records, and international guests — all celebrating Duke's memory.

Details of the conference are available from Eddie Lambert, 'Ellington '85', 92 Hadfield Street, Oldham OLB 3EE.

GOOD NEWS for Stan Kenton fans, irked by those badly pressed bootlegs over the years... Crescendo Records' boss Gene Norman has acquired US rights to the entire Creative World Catalogue. Pending UK distribution arrangements, write to Gene Norman at Suite 4a, 8400 Sunset Boulevard, Los Angeles, California.

BET YOU didn't know that one of the unsung heroes of jazz information services quietly beavers away relentlessly in the British Library.

Chris Clark, curator of the National Sound Archive's contemporary jazz section at the British Library, should receive a medal for his unceasing efforts to bring the collection up to international strength.

The collection offers a unique opportunity to study a vast selection of British and foreign records, including BBC broadcasts. The library holds almost all the available published discographies and a selection of the top jazz periodicals.

The NSA's reference services are free (no membership or ticket is required), and you can use an extensive archive catalogue and index. The Listening Service is on an appointment basis but the library is open Monday to Friday.

For further information ring the sterling Chris Clark on 01-589 6603, ext. 211, at the British Library National Sound Archive, 29 Exhibition Road, London SW7.

DAVID WIDGERY, writer of the Billie Holiday appreciation in our last issue, tells us that his book on music, sex and politics, *Beating Time*, is now being published in the new Chatto and Windus Tigerstripe series in autumn 1985.

THE LATEST Arts Council jazz bursaries present an interesting collection of projects.

Drummer Allan Ganley will be writing a suite in commemoration of Tubby Hayes, Keith Christie and Pat Smythe, while pianist Terry Disley can now start work on his musical dedication to the Thames Flood Barrier. Loose Tubes (Django Bates's group) also receive awards for new work.

Other recipients include Keith Rowe's guitar project involving graphic score, Evan Parker's electronic modification of soprano saxophone, and John Williams's new suite for four baritone saxes.

THE UNTIMELY death of 43-year-old guitarist Lenny Breau (of unknown causes) on 12 August in Los Angeles hardly rated a mention in the music press. A lamentable fact considering Breau has long been considered one of the most technically accomplished and harmonically inventive of jazz guitarists. His much-loved bebop collaborations with pedal-steel guitarist Buddy Emmons (of Sho-Bud fame) will remain classic recordings. His passing is a great loss.

READERS with a passion for discographies might be interested to know about Norbert Ruecker's shop in Frankfurt.

He claims he can supply almost every discography on jazz and blues that's in print. Recently available through Ruecker is the Mingus discog by Lindenmaier and Coleman Hawkins Volume One by Jean François Villertard.

Write to Norbert Ruecker Publishing and Mail Order Book Shop, PO Box 4106, D-6000 Frankfurt 1, West Germany.



Metheny (and Manfred) — BBC TV

PAT METHENY fans are in for a real treat when BBCTV's *Old Grey Whistle Test* will devote a large slot to featuring Metheny demonstrating his new intriguing instrument the Synclavier. Producer Trevor Dann (what an enlightened fellow) says that he's also hoping to feature a rare interview with ECM label boss Manfred Eicher. Scan the TV listings carefully when the programme series returns on October 23.

And, talking of ECM, such is the growing enthusiasm for the label's individualistic records output that they've had to introduce a label 'fan club' supplying catalogue, news, gossip, details of artists and upcoming releases. To add your name to the 1000-strong mailing list write to 'ECM Fan Club', c/o Import Music Service, 54 Maddox Street, London W1R 9PA.

JOHN SURMAN and his Wessex Collection kicks off a promising new series of weekly jazz concerts on BBC Radio 3 on 16 October (10 p.m.). Subsequent concerts (all presented by Charles Fox) are Stan Tracey's Poets' Suite (23 Oct); Graham Collier's Hoarded Dreams (30); Gil Evans British Orchestra at Camden, 1983 (6 November); Mike Westbrook's Young Person's Guide to the Jazz Orchestra (13); Trevor Watts' Moiré Music at Bracknell, 1984 (20). Mouth-watering, huh? And that's not all... as a tempting taster to the concert series, John Surman is the guest stowaway on Radio 4's *Desert Island Discs* (6 Oct, repeated 12 Oct) — not to be missed at any price.



Surman — BBC Radio 3

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Enquiries Welcome

BLUE NOTE RISES AGAIN

THE CLASSIC, much-loved Blue Note label is to be reborn in January. This delightful news follows, not entirely-surprisingly, the arrival of the enterprising Bruce Lundvall at Capitol/EMI from Elektra/Asylum in the States.

Lundvall intends the relaunched Blue Note label to be not just for re-issues but also a showcase for new and established talent.

The first batch of thirty albums will include twenty re-issues, five previously unissued titles unearthed from the vaults, and five newly recorded albums.

The re-issues, to be released in their original covers, are expected to include milestones from Thelonious Monk, Bud Powell and Miles Davis.

The re-issue programme will be directed by Michael Cuscuna.

New recordings will include the George Russell Big Band's *The African Game* and the debut album from Stanley Jordan, a young guitarist who caused such a stir at this year's Kool Jazz Festival.

Simultaneous audiophile cassettes are planned and a series of Blue Note compact discs hasn't been ruled out.

The future of Elektra Musician, which Lundvall elevated to superior status during his time with Elektra/Asylum, is unclear but negotiations are in hand with Capitol to buy the Musician masters.

THE LEWISHAM JAZZ FESTIVAL (Lewisham Theatre, Catford) has announced its week-long line-up as follows: Astrud Gilberto and Ramsey Lewis (21 Oct); Buddy Rich (22); Memphis Slim and George Melly (23); Louis Armstrong All Stars (24); British Gala with Ronnie Scott, Don Lusher, Tommy Whittle, Tony Kinsey Big Band etc (25); Roberta Flack (26); Peggy Lee (27); Nancy Wilson and Buddy Greco (28).

Astrud Gilberto — bossa boom!

THE UNITED JAZZ AND ROCK ENSEMBLE and the Dave Holland Quintet offer some strong jazz interest in the Arts Council's Contemporary Music Network tours for this autumn.

The United Jazz and Rock Ensemble's first British tour will feature UJRE stalwarts Kenny Wheeler, Ian Carr, Ack van Rooyen, Albert Mangelsdorff, Charlie Mariano, Barbara Thompson, Wolfgang Dauner, Volker Kreigel, Eberhard Weber, and John Hiseman. UJRE dates — Bracknell's South Hill Park Arts Centre (9 Oct); London's Bloomsbury Theatre (10); Manchester's Royal Northern College of Music (12); Durham's Dunelm House (13); Mansfield Leisure Centre (14); Warwick University (19); Sheffield University (20); Kendal's South Lakeland Leisure Centre (21); Newcastle's People's Theatre (23).

The Dave Holland Quintet line-up includes Kenny Wheeler, Julian Priester, Steve Coleman and Marvin Smith. Dates — London's Bloomsbury Theatre (7 Nov); Bristol's Arncliffe Gallery (8); Birmingham's Strathallan Hall (11); Huddersfield Poly (12); Sheffield's Leadmill (13); Nottingham's Vino's (14); Newcastle's People's Theatre (15); Manchester's Royal Northern College of Music (16).

THE BASS CLEF, London's newest multi-music venue — which opened in September at 35 Cornet Street, N1 — continues its policy as promoters of 'quality music' throughout this month.

Operating a broadly based programme — with the emphasis on jazz, African and latin — the club also plans to give space to rock, soul, funk and occasionally classical music.

The Bass Clef is located in the newly extended Wave Studios and boasts a 200-plus capacity including a fully licensed bar and 50-seat restaurant. The club is open six days a week (Tuesday to Sunday) and includes lunchtimes. Facilities will also be available for recording in-hour performances.

A membership of £25 a year offers discount on entry and a regular news-sheet but, throughout October, a full year's subscription will cost a bargain £10.

GERRY MULLIGAN AND JIMMY SMITH are among the headliners for the 1984 Guinness Jazz Festival taking place at Cork's Royal Opera House, Oct 26-28.

Dates — Nancy Wilson, Buddy Greco and NYJO (26); Jimmy Smith, Teddy Wilson and Benny Goodman tribute (27); Gerry Mulligan, Louis Stewart, Louis Armstrong All Stars and Bertice Reading (28).

LEEDS TRADES CLUB has recently opened as a new jazz venue, based at Saville Mount, Leeds 7.

Forthcoming dates include The Jazz Doctors with Billy Bang and Frank Lowe (20 Oct); Memphis Slim (Leeds University, 2 Nov); Gary Boyle and John Etheridge (25); The Guest Stars' Christmas Party (17 Dec).



Tippett on tour

INNOVATIVE and internationally acclaimed British pianist Keith Tippett is preparing for his first national tour for many years with a sextet.

The tour, organised by Jazz Services, takes in Brighton's Pavilion Theatre (12 Oct); Aldershot's West End Centre (13); Birmingham's Strathallan Hall (14); Hull's Spring Street Theatre (15); Nottingham's Vino's (17); Norwich's Premises (18); Bristol's Avon Gorge Hotel (19); Exeter's Barnfield Theatre (20); London's Kentish Town's Bull & Gate (22); Sheffield's Leadmill (24); Manchester's Band on the Wall (25); Carlisle's Tithebarn (31); Stockton's Dovecot Arts Centre (1 Nov); Liverpool's Bradford Hotel (2); Leeds' Playhouse (4). The Exeter date will be recorded by the BBC for future broadcast.

SOUTH LONDON promoter Johnny Edge is back in business on a regular basis with the Jazz Co-op at The Tunnel, Tunnel Avenue, Greenwich SE10.

Gigs for October include the Clark Tracey Trio (Wednesdays); salsa band Sonido des Londres (Friday, 5th); Dudu Pukwana and friends (Sunday lunchtimes); George Lee's jazz-funk band Anansi (Fridays, from 12th).

THE BUDDY RICH BAND, featuring Steve Marcus, follows its September stint at Ronnie Scott's Club with a break-neck national tour as follows:

Wolverhampton's The Grand (7); Bristol's Colston Hall (8); Southend's Cliffs Pavilion (9); Halifax's Civic Theatre (11); Stockport's Davenport Theatre (12); Swansea's Brangwyn Hall (13); Sheffield's Crucible Theatre (14); Glasgow's Theatre Royal (15); Aberdeen's Her Majesty's (16); Edinburgh's Usher Hall (17); Lincoln's Theatre Royal (21); Lewisham Festival (22); Warwick University (24); Chichester Festival (25); Nottingham's Royal Concert Hall (26); London's Dominion Theatre (27); London's Wimbledon Theatre (28); Hatfield's Forum Theatre (29); Crawley Leisure Centre (30); Margate's Winter Gardens (31).

NANCY WILSON AND TEDDY WILSON are among the 'Living Legends' touring here during October.

Tour dates are as follows: Astrud Gilberto and Ramsey Lewis (Lewisham Festival, 21; Cork Festival, 28); Edwen Hawkins Singers (Wembley Conference Centre, 21); Nancy Wilson (Cork Festival, 26; Lewisham Festival, 28); Teddy Wilson (Chichester Festival, 26; Cork Festival, 27; Cardiff's St David's Hall, 28); Peggy Lee (Lewisham Festival, 27; Nottingham's Royal Concert Hall, 29).

JOIN MASTER OF CEREMONIES SLIM GAILLARD AT

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The Welsh Jazz Festival is presented by St David's Hall in association with the Welsh Jazz Society. With the support of South East Wales Arts Association. Due to contractual obligations Slim Gaillard will not appear on Sunday 28th October.

LIVE WIRE

IMPROVISED MUSIC FESTIVAL '84

The Purcell Room, London

THE ROOM for Improvised Music in Brixton, South London, presents a regular weekly space in which improvisers can function. Under the auspices of the Greater London Council's 'Alternatives' season on the South Bank, RIM created the Improvised Music Festival '84 at the Purcell Room. Given the venue – and the prestige which has attached itself to it – it was inevitable that, in some quarters, the festival would be regarded as a showcase for the idiom.

In assembling the programme, RIM avoided the pitfalls and temptations which must have presented themselves. On the one hand they steered clear of the trap of cramming the festival with just the established names – the 'stars' if you like – of improvised music; on the other they achieved a broad, balanced look at current improvisation activity in this country.

Thus the festival ranged from Mokoko (touted as the first all-black group of free improvisers to perform on the South Bank), through instigators of British free improvisation, to the most recent wave of musicians to work the genre. Although Mokoko played on Friday, Sunday – when two of the four concerts took place – clearly reflected the breadth of the festival.

In Alex McGuire, Ian McLachlan and Steve Noble, the festival embraced some of the most recent improvisers to emerge. They played with energy and invention but wear their influences too readily, displaying an affection for the Dutch school. The spirit of Han Bennink was particularly evident in Noble's work. As they all tumbled into Dixieland or New Orleans or stride piano, the element of friction evident in the juxtapositions of the Dutch seemed absent.

In stark contrast Trevor Watts, Evan Parker, Barry Guy, Eddie Prevost and Keith Rowe were representative of some of the pioneering players of the Sixties who have continued to re-shape, re-fashion and re-model their music. Watts, with Vervan Weston at the piano, probed at the very roots of the music with warmth, affinity and conviction. Maintaining a jazz core they passed melodic and rhythmic ideas between them, developing, coaxing and appearing to enjoy themselves in the process. Supersession (Parker/Guy/Prevost/Rowe) chartered more garrulous territory. Their music was rugged and

organic, applying torque and slowly releasing – a compelling cauldron of activity.

With the passage of time, not only do the different 'schools' blur and intermix, as in the case of the Musicians Co-Op and AMM in Supersession but so do generations. Thus we find Weston with Watts and Roger Turner with Phil Minton. They rendered a performance that was quite the most gripping I have witnessed from them. Minton's extraordinarily extended vocal work was uttered as if it were the abstract embodiment of some grotesque internalized drama with Minton playing every role, his grimaces and stance echoing the sounds he made, from salivary and glottal noises to full-throated vocalisation. Turner worked with explosive percussion salvos and fine-filigree textures. They dovetailed their elements masterfully.

In the mid-Seventies, the London Musicians Collective was crucial in the development of the so-called 'second generation'; not only of Toop, Beresford and Burwell et al, but of a great depth of musical activity. Many musicians have used and continue to use the facilities of the LMC. Alan Tomlinson and British Summertime Ends amongst them. Tomlinson unleashed a virtuoso repertoire of tricks designed to extend his trombone but these are harnessed to a musical intent and, consequently, there is a substance in his display of the manipulation of timbre and tone.

British Summertime Ends tread quite different ground. Epitomized by the deft lyricism and invention of Sylvia Hallett's violin, Clive Bell's interest in Far Eastern reeds and flutes and Stuart Jones' agile cello, BSE played a set of assiduously focussed music which only flagged briefly about three-quarters of the way through as they combined folk (and other) influences in a telling continuum. Particularly effective was their accordion trio with the musicians moving around the hall shifting the listener's relationship with the sound sources.

Pouring so much activity into just four concerts, achieving such a balance and yet giving the festival a particular character represents a considerable achievement for RIM. Gerry Gold threatened, as the last concert closed, that the festival would return. I shall watch for it next year.

Kenneth Ansell

IMPROVISED MUSIC FESTIVAL II

THERE'S usually enough in the way of grandeur surrounding your average festival to take care of the aficionados and (hopefully) attract the ears of the curious, too. With the Festival Of Improvised Music '84, there were additional trappings, though – its location and format signified breaks with tradition – and brought with them new demands.

Here was, in effect, a club calendar in up-market environs. London's South Bank, pillar of the cultural establishment, had thrown open its doors to the fringe, with a little help from the progressively minded GLC (perhaps spreading its cultural wing-span to the fullest in the face of its threatened destruction). And instead of the traditional festival fare – international 'stars' dangled carrot-like on sticks – the more familiar pickings of the Brixton-based Room For Improvised Music, a musician-run venue which, for a weekend at least, junked the acoustical disaster of said room for a 'real' performance space.

But more so than London's other major festival of improvised music – Actual – this compendium highlighted differing concerns and attitudes. There were greater expectancies of an unfamiliar audience (the South Bank has a certain aesthetic attraction to its regulars) and neither the musicians or the festival organisers seemed unmoved by it – although the goods did as much to confound as they did to conform. There was the barely hidden sense of having to rise to some sort of occasion – as if certain facets of improvisation had to be impressed.

In the event, instrumental virtuosity stood back-to-back with not-so-old-fashioned show-biz glam, although rarely with genuine accord. That was effectively patented by trombonist Alan Tomlinson

whose early afternoon solo set was a masterpiece of disciplined adventure, delivered with near vaudeville-style flamboyance. As an innovator he is matched only by the American George Lewis; both have effectively excavated previously hidden areas of the instrument's potential in crudely humorous, non-academic ways – but Tomlinson's ability to involve the audience in the actual process remains unrivalled.

Performance art as a tool in improvisation had been ushered in by the trio British Summertime Ends who sharpened up their brand of kitsch with visual vulgarity – Sylvia Hallett sported mock-Eastern drapes whilst Stuart Jones passed for a pretty convincing spiv. With Clive Bell they donned accordions and went moon-walking, leaving the changing textures within the seamless continuum of sound to unfold as slowly as their exaggerated movements around the hall.

Supersession tailored their impact to a purely sonic attack, distilling a wealth of technique. For the most part, the collective empathy paid off, although the divide between Evan Parker and Barry Guy's combined bubbling intensity and Eddie Prevost and Keith Rowe's glistens was intermittently evident.

Other directions were paved – and retrodden. Alex Maguire, Ian McLachlan and Steve Noble's patchwork of borrowings (from Cecil Taylor to Alterations) sounded disappointing and confused on this occasion, content merely to state influences rather than transcending them. Vervan Weston and Trevor Watts gave the jazz impulse a more purposeful airing, whilst Roger Turner and Phil Minton married voice and percussion in a set that made sense of the term avant-garde.

David Ilic



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Further details from the Contemporary Music Network, Arts Council of Great Britain, 105 Piccadilly,
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HUGH MASEKELA 100 Club, London

THERE has been no shortage of opportunities to catch Hugh Masekela's touring band in recent months. Launched with a triumphant appetite-whetter at Frith Street's favourite jazz haunt one Sunday in June, the twelve-strong organisation went on to stretch its wings barely a week later at London's Venue.

Masekela was gaining a reputation for long sets and this was certainly to be the case for the two-night stopover at the 100 Club in early August. On a specially enlarged stage it was to be a showtime of some 75 minutes with all the team's talents on display.

What were facets are assets. Vocals are handled by the leader with guitarist John Selolwane and master tambourine man Tsepo Tshola, while the ladies of the chorus, Ruby Morare, Sonti Mdebele and Felicia sashaye in perfect harmony. Rhythm comes from second guitarist Banjo Mosele, bassist Aubrey Oaki and drummer Mopati Tsenyane with more than a little help from Mervyn Africa's skilful keyboards and Francis Fuster's percussion.

LENA HORNE

The Lady and Her Music, Adelphi Theatre, London

IT is not rare for jazz veterans who have reached commercial success to disappoint the fans of their earlier performances, and I was apprehensive about attending Lena Horne's *The Lady and Her Music*, especially on the London stage at the Adelphi. But my apprehension was washed away in the opening number.

The impact was summed up in Robert Hewison's review in the *Sunday Times*: Hewison complained that she didn't sing 'one song straight'. Which is exactly why I liked it so much.

The programme varied from night to night, but was basically a musical life history with a running monologue from Lena Horne, spiced with singing and dancing from a 'cast' of three. The core band was surrounded by a locally-assembled big band with 'musical conductor' Linda Twine whipping them up to the heady pace set by Horne herself.

'Surrey with a Fringe on Top' was not on the list of 24 songs which the programme said she would draw from, but her version of it — opening the show — turned a trite musical number into a vivid and spicy love story in the best tradition of Billie Holiday, the undisputed mistress of translating popular song into art.

Holiday herself came in for a tribute. Horne complained that when, in hindsight, she should have stayed on 52nd St, where Billie Holiday and Hazel Scott were singing, she was lured off to Hollywood. This move came in for its deserved amount of flack in the monologues, but also provided a context for one of the review's most moving stories.

In the Hollywood section — the format is chronological — Horne did a snappy, light-hearted version of 'Stormy Weather'. But at the end she remarked 'because I was under contract and was black, they made me sing a song made famous at the time by Ethel Waters. I was too young then to appreciate it but have grown into this song with age and appreciate it much more now.' Then, with Ron Bridgewater oozing out a tenor solo at her elbow, she delivered a devastating and sensual version of 'Stormy Weather' that left the hall dripping with emotion.

Earlier scenes featured her failure as a

But the man of the match is undoubtedly fiery alto-saxophonist Barry Rachabane who locks horns with Masekela from start to finish and, when it comes to his ballad feature, stops the show.

Masekela chooses to play flugelhorn throughout and leads his mighty ensemble through an eclectic fusion of soul, funk and jazz elements together with the language and rhythms of the homeland, now a base in Botswana following a return from a twenty-year sabbatical in the United States.

Only when the group is forced — for reasons of obvious commerciality — to sing in American is there anything less than total conviction. Somehow they just don't sound right chanting 'Don't Go Lose It Baby' (the new single), or 'It's a Gas' during the old Masekela warhorse 'Grazin' in the Grass'. But these moments of crossover are rare and it was a gas, as an exhausted 100 Club audience witnessed as it made its collective way to the exit.

David Yeats



Hugh Masekela

Cotton Club dancer, notably on Cab Calloway's 'Lady With a Fan', a marvellous showcase for the two women in her cast. But the highlight of Horne's interplay with the cast came after the interval in a duo with Stanley Perryman, who has danced with a host of companies including the Dance Theatre of Harlem; and his blend of jazz dance and ballet were used to the full. He danced the part of the fly to Horne's talking blues on 'Spider And The Fly', where their timing and delivery were woven together in the best tradition of collective improvisation.

Lena Horne is another of those black musicians to have made a few waves with her politics. But the best political point on the night came not from her commentary but from the presence of a black woman as band leader. Both with her keyboard work and her successful efforts to bring a standard stage band to life and humour, Linda Twine proved herself an unqualified asset to the London stage. Previously, the programme says, she was assistant conductor in the movies *The Wiz*, *Ain't Misbehavin'* and *Bye Bye Birdie* as well as writing and arranging for the Boys Choir in Harlem.

Mention must also go to the core band, well placed in the front line of the two sections of the bigger band: on keyboards, Terrance Burrus; guitar, Rodney Jones; bass, Benjamin Brown; saxophones and flute, Ron Bridgewater, and drums, (if he was announced correctly — the programme is different) Wilbur Fletcher.

James Ball



Lena Horne

CHICK COREA MIROSLAV VITOUS ROY HAYNES HOWARD RILEY JAKI BYARD Royal Festival Hall, London

A PITY that the latercomers who came stamping in at the climax of Howard Riley's 'Circle Cycle' solo hadn't bothered to arrive earlier, for the pianist's thoughtful reading of one of his more amenable compositions — the structure gradually revealed and then picked apart again in a manner now trenchant, now quietly lyrical — proved to be some of the best music in this odd matching of three very different keyboard virtuosi.

Jaki Byard's three solos, played with huge enjoyment by a burly, chuckling man in a capacious safari suit, seemed to disguise his massive ability in a cloak of near-hokum. 'European Episode' especially intermingled striking substitutions and precise rhythmic felicities with the sort of rollicking stride piano he contributed to Mingus' 'Parkeriana' twenty years before. Riley joined him for a freewheeling 'Round Midnight' that suffered from mutual unfamiliarity with personal styles but still inveigled some serious and some satirical tricks from that extraordinary theme. A final gallop through 'Straight No Chaser' was delicious.

Chick Corea's trio of all stars (including himself) at least succeeded in entertaining each other, if the permanent-fixture grins were any indication. A good deal of foppish pleasantry went into the readings of 'Night And Day' and 'I Hear A Rhapsody': Corea executed his customary repertoire of excitable runs, Miroslav Vitous was all busy fingers at the bass and the peculiarly brash Roy Haynes — probably imported to introduce muscle into Corea's image — simply played at the other two. The one time (on an original called 'Mirrorvision') that a genuine trio music seemed about to be created, mere showmanship soon won through.

How disappointing Corea still is! On his solo feature glimmers of real improvisation kept peeking from the forest of figures he must've practised a thousand times at home. I suppose what he does is still in the name of communication, or commerce, or something.

Richard Cook

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O N T H E W I R E

A PERSONAL OPINION BY ANTHONY WOOD

I READ somewhere this magazine being described as 'avant-garde oriented'. I'm not about to refute or uphold the claim. For the benefit of old soldiers, I stated the position two years ago in Issue One. But it did start me thinking about that label 'avant-garde'.

The music which gave rise to the term is now spread over a twenty-year period. Indeed, if you take into account the work of all musicians who are said to fit this category, then the period can vary between thirty and fifty years, depending on which war you served in. But, seriously, using the emergence of Messrs. Coleman, Shepp, Ayler and Taylor in the Sixties as a reasonable yardstick, it's clear that the use of the term 'avant-garde' needs fresh examination.

It's now beyond refute that the changes in jazz which musicians brought about in the Sixties radically altered the previously accepted rules of harmony, melody and rhythm which had formed the cornerstone of jazz structure over the previous sixty years; rules which had been questioned as far back as Lennie Tristano's experiments in 'free improvisation' in the late Forties and given more definite thought in the Fifties by Miles Davis and John Coltrane, so that by the start of the Sixties the process was well on its way.

Of course there were doubters. The incredible accusations of heresy levelled at Ornette Coleman when he first played here in 1965 – not only by blinkered critics but also certain eminent musicians – now seem like a very sick joke. But, then, Charlie Parker had been subjected to the same treatment in the early Forties, so what's new? Coleman's Atlantic recordings are recognized as much as jazz classics as the Parker Dial sessions or Armstrong's Hot Five recordings. What is less clearly defined and documented is what happened after most of the fuss had died down.

Certainly the Seventies marked a consolidation period. More important, jazz – like rock music during the same period – fragmented into less easily defined pieces. Jazz-rock as defined by Miles Davis's *Bitches Brew* expanded into fusion and funk. So-called free jazz similarly splintered as the Seventies advanced, and absorbed many hitherto little-explored elements such as various folk forms (Don Cherry), Contemporary European music (Anthony Braxton) and meeting funk halfway (recent Ornette Coleman, Oliver Lake and Ronald Shannon Jackson). More simply, many musicians took a hard look at how far and fast they had come and went back crossing the Ts and dotting the Is (Archie Shepp, Arthur Blythe and David Murray).

So far as the black jazz tradition is concerned where now is

the 'avant-garde'? My answer is simple – there isn't one. It has merely been absorbed into the mainstream like all previous radical moves has ever made. It's clear with hindsight that the music emanating from Chicago in the late Sixties via the AACM – particularly that of the Art Ensemble of Chicago, Anthony Braxton, Muhal Richard Abrams and previously Sun Ra – represented the most radical point musically which jazz has reached. It has gone little further since. Few black musicians have attempted to travel down the same road as, say, Evan Parker or Derek Bailey, exceptions being Braxton, George Lewis and Joe McPhee, all of whom have been willing participants with Europeans.

This fact highlights another development which became apparent as the Seventies rolled on. The gulf between black American free jazz and its European counterpart, hitherto indistinguishable, widened so much as almost to disappear from each other's view.

Two records under the leadership of John Stevens perfectly illustrate the move here away from a jazz-based music. If you can get hold of a copy listen to *Challenge* (Eyemark Empl 1002) by the Spontaneous Music Ensemble recorded in 1966 which included jazz-schooled musicians such as Trevor Watts, Kenny Wheeler and Paul Rutherford, and compare with *Biosystem* (Incus 24) recorded in 1977 and involving three musicians with no jazz background.

When the cynics charge the European improviser with not being able to play jazz they might in some cases be right. Many of the newer generation of British improvisers have no jazz links at all, why should they? Improvisation is the oldest form of music-making, predating jazz by a few thousand years. Merely choosing to move closer to the roots of music by playing collective improvisation is hardly the heights of extremism.

So where does that leave the so-called 'avant-garde'? I think we can safely say, finally, that the term is dead and, with it, any likelihood that a single figure or school of musicians is ever going to alter radically the direction of jazz.

So don't go looking for another Armstrong, Parker, Coltrane or Ornette because those days are gone. I know it has been said before but this time jazz has reached its final frontier. Any figures who emerge will merely restate history, Wynton Marsalis being a perfect example. Whatever goes beyond is not jazz. The question is, are we prepared to follow where it leads without concerning ourselves with labels or its relevance to history? The 'And...' on *The Wire*'s cover should be providing some serious discussion in the months to come. ■

Anthony Wood

IN STRUGGLE, IN GRACE

Abdullah Ibrahim: Music, Revolution & Prayer



JAK KILBY

The great Capetown pianist ABDULLAH IBRAHIM (aka Dollar Brand) grew up in apartheid South Africa and has devoted his life to fighting that rank injustice. In this rare in-depth interview, he tells Graham Lock about the role his music plays in the freedom struggle; and talks, too, about his Muslim faith, and his musical loves from Africa to Duke, Monk and free-form.

PART 1. THE CULTURAL FREEDOM FIGHTER

'Hit and run, hit and run, freedom comes through the barrel of a gun.'

JULY 1983. Abdullah Ibrahim stands at his hotel-room window and looks down at the green turf of the nearby Lords cricket ground.

'Did you see that Australian team?' he asks. 'Ray Lindwall, Keith Miller: Oooooe, they were great!'

You saw them here? I ask, puzzled.

'No, no. In Capetown, in the Fifties. I used to watch the cricket there. I saw Stanley Matthews, too.' He smiles at the memory of a pleasure long since sacrificed in the fight for that single, elemental right of equality.

It's a minor irony of fate that Abdullah Ibrahim, one of music's most eloquent opponents of apartheid, is here in a hotel overlooking Lords in the very week that the MCC are to vote on whether to send a cricket team to South Africa.

The notion that it's now OK to do so, that the Pretoria regime is taking a more 'liberal' stand on apartheid, is dismissed by Ibrahim with a contemptuous snort.

'It's a joke, man, a smokescreen. What do they actually mean by liberal changes? They say, OK, they're going to give limited civil rights to the so-called Coloured people and the so-called Indian people. Blacks are completely excluded! That's 75, 80 per cent of the population excluded!'

'And Black people didn't vote for this situation,' he chuckles incredulously. 'So it's illegal – the South African government is illegal. I never voted for apartheid. I've never voted in my life.'

He lowers his tall, wiry frame into an armchair and pours out two cups of his favourite mu tea. My impression is of a man of great dignity, authority and charm. On the drive back from the soundcheck he was affable, full of humorous anecdotes; now,



NICK WHITE

talking about the politics of his native land, his speech is quiet and urgent.

I ask him how he sees the current situation in South Africa. 'The Nationalist Party are split. Some think they should give these rights, others say that it's opening up the floodgates. And, really, they've created a situation – apartheid – that's impossible for them to dismantle, so they are politically bankrupt. There's nothing that the regime can offer the people, except oppression. It's an instrument of destruction, so it has to be destroyed!'

But how long will that take?

'Time is not the question,' Ibrahim says firmly. 'Revolution is not, like, OK, let's get it together tonight and tomorrow everything is cool. Revolution is a 24-hour-a-day, 25-hour-a-day job. You have to be watchful. We're not fighting the regime because we want to have a good time; it's for our children and their children. Because my great grandfather fought them, my grandmother, my mother – the people of South Africa have been fighting the fascists for centuries, and we will continue to fight them until they are destroyed. The will of the people will prevail, because that is the law.'

'Allah says in the Koran, the truth has come and falsehood has vanished. The nature of truth is that it stays, the nature of falsehood is that it leaves.'

He smiles grimly. 'And the system that regime has created in South Africa must be the most horrendous falsehood ever perpetrated on the human race.'

A TACTICAL RETREAT

The jazz in this story begins with Louis Jordan and The Tympany Five, whose jump-band music crossed the Atlantic in the Forties and found its way to Capetown, where hits like 'Choo Choo Ch' Boogie', 'Caldonia' and 'Is You Or Is You Ain't My Baby' were blasted out by the township ice-cream vans.

These vans, with their boisterous selections of Jordan, Tiny Bradshaw, Erskine Hawkins, were a vital source of jazz for the young Abdullah Ibrahim, then Dollar Brand – or, more precisely, Adolph Johannes Brand, born October 1934, son of a Bushman tribeswoman and a Basuto tribesman. The other sources he remembers were the one weekly jazz show on the radio and the musical studies he began at the age of seven, encouraged by a grandmother who played piano at the local AME church.

He began his musical career, though, in a vocal group, The Streamline Brothers (four men, one woman!) whose repertoire spanned South African traditional songs and American doowop.

'Our traditional music,' explains Ibrahim, 'has the same source as Black American music. The urban music was very close to swing, so it was not like we were playing American music, it was all the same to us. We sang traditional songs, American popular songs, doowop, spirituals... you remember The Deep River Boys?' He breaks off to sing an impromptu version of 'It's Just The Gipsy In My Soul'. 'Those Streamline Brothers! Oooeee, they could sing!'

Ibrahim moved to piano for his next band, The Tuxedo Slickers; then came a stint with the Willie Max dance band before, at the beginning of the Sixties, he formed his own group, The Jazz Epistles, who included trumpeter Hugh Masekela and altoist Kippie Moeketsi. They were the first Black group in South Africa to record an LP.

What was the government line on jazz then? I ask.

'The government line is that you must stand in line, whatever it is,' Ibrahim grunts sarcastically. 'At that time the Nationalists had just introduced the Group Areas Act. Before, there were still places where people lived and played together and there were mixed audiences. Then the Nationalists separated everybody into what they thought were their rightful social places, so communication broke down. The whole culture broke down.'

Presumably that was one of the reasons you left South Africa in 1962?

'We don't really leave, you know,' he says softly. 'It's a

tactical retreat. We regard ourselves as cultural freedom fighters. And when our cadres, our young people, go outside the country for training, we don't say that they left – it's a tactical retreat.'

Abdullah Ibrahim's tactical retreat took him to Switzerland, and then around the European club circuit. But it was back in Zurich, in February 1963, that his fiancée Bea Benjamin (now his wife) persuaded an itinerant Duke Ellington to hear him play. Ellington, then a director of Reprise Records, was so impressed that he fixed up some recording dates for the young pianist and supervised them himself.

For Ibrahim, this was a marvellous fillip. Invitations came for him to play at the Antibes Jazz Festival and, in 1965, at the prestigious Newport Jazz Festival. This took him to the US after an unhappy stay in London, which he now remembers as a time of too little work ('I think we got three gigs in six months, two pounds ten shillings a time!) and too much drink ('Oh, man, that was a foggy time. The fog was inside my head, right? I had a problem then, too much liquid!').

Ibrahim stayed in the US for three years. He played with the Ellington band for a time; he also became very involved in New York's radical music scene, playing with pioneers like John Coltrane, Don Cherry, Ornette Coleman and Sunny Murray.

Was it not a big jump, I ask, from playing with Ellington to playing with, say, Coltrane or Coleman?

'Oh no, man. You've never heard Ellington play "out"? Wow! Listen to that LP *Piano In The Foreground*. There's a track "Summertime", listen to Duke's piano there – it's Cecil Taylor!' He grins at my naivety. 'They played that stuff long ago, it was



just never recorded, except here and there, 'cause the record companies freaked out when they heard it.

"It's like the French and Charlie Parker. You know that story? When the critics in America were first writing about Charlie Parker, they sent an LP over to the French critics and the French critics sent it back with a message, whoa, this LP's recorded at the wrong speed. The Americans had to send it back again with a note – no, man, the guy plays at that speed!"

Free music, he adds, was 'euphoric to play, but nobody wanted to listen – those were the *lean years*'. One consequence of this is that his music in the Seventies and Eighties has taken several steps back from the farther edges of free-form. Ibrahim still makes room for improvising but now it's within a song-structure and nearly always balanced by his gift for spare, graceful melodies. If the more avant-garde fans were disappointed, at least a lot of people are listening now. Another pertinent factor is that Ibrahim's musical roots predate free-form: John Coltrane was an inspiration, yes, but outside of his African heritage the most evident influences on his music have always been Duke Ellington and Thelonious Monk, whose songs he has frequently recorded.

Why those two in particular? I ask.

He shrugs philosophically. "If you are a so-called European classical player, you have to go through Bach. There's no way you can handle that music without going through Bach. And if you're a pianist you have to dig Chopin. That's Duke and Monk. Monk is an extension of Duke. Duke is the founder and there's no way to get around it. The music of Ellington, the sound of Ellington, is an institution. Ellington is the sound scientist, and Monk is – purity and clarity."

"You can play Monk's music to children and they turn on to it immediately. The grown-ups say, whoa, Monk is difficult, he's weird but the reason is they are too strung up. Kids listen to him 'cause of that purity and clarity, that angelic quality he kept. And because he's *mischievous*."

Max Roach told me this story, right. He was recording with Abbey Lincoln, back in the Sixties when Abbey was a very young singer, and this was one of her first LPs. She was having trouble with a song, trying and trying to get it right, and Monk was in the studio, just listening. After the fifth or sixth take, he walks over to Abbey and whispers in her ear. And after the session, she says to Max, "Man, you've got some weird friends. That Monk!" So Max says, "Why what did he say?" And she says, "He came up and he told me, sing it *wrong*!" Ibrahim bursts into delighted laughter.

"Monk's music is beautiful. You can't get into it or play it without clearing your head. Time! He was into time." (He taps out a bop rhythm, then hums a ballad.) "See, Monk played other rhythms, too, he played tempos in between. That's why drummers had problems with him. Like, you came in there and you're a bebop drummer – pichaw, pichaw, pichaw – but Monk's got one beat that's as big as a house – paaaaaahaaaaah – and then it takes a hundred years before the next beat arrives – paaaaaahaaaaah! So you've got all this space in between and drummers didn't know what the hell to do, they'd get lost in all that space."

He laughs again. "Like, Monk told Ben Riley once, 'Just because you're the drummer doesn't mean you've got the best beat in the band.' Monk was something else, man!"

MANNENBERG – IS WHERE IT'S HAPPENING

In 1968 Abdullah Ibrahim returned to South Africa, and divided the next years between Africa, Europe and the US. While few of his Sixties' recordings remain in catalogue (notable exceptions are 1965's *The Dream*, and *Confluence* – a 1968 duo with Gato Barbieri, both on Black Lion), his music through the Seventies and Eighties has been well documented and LPs on numerous labels are currently available in the UK.

Despite the maelstrom of New York free-form from which he'd just emerged, the prime influence on Ibrahim's Seventies music was his return to African roots. Nearly every LP title refers to Africa and many individual tracks are either drawn from traditional sources or deal with specific aspects of South

African life, often from an upfront political perspective: 'Soweto' and 'Mannenberg' honour the townships, 'Tula Dubula' anticipates the racists' downfall, while 'Hit And Run' baldly asserts 'Freedom comes through the barrel of a gun'.

These South African songs are the most dramatic element in Ibrahim's music. Whether it's the sombre left-hand rumbles with which he mourns the latest racist outrage or the exuberant, lyrical swing of his township salutes, there's a direct and deeply emotional quality to his music which can pierce to the heart.

A second vital influence on Ibrahim's work stems from his conversion to Islam in 1968. On LPs like *Good News From Africa* and *Children of Africa*, the calming presence of Muslim devotional music and chants is to the fore and not his music's most ready spiritual facet – its sense of serenity – is very apparent.

Though these Afro-Islamic aspects predominate, Ibrahim maintained his interest in the US avant-garde. He spent much of 1972 in Copenhagen, playing with Don Cherry and Carlos Ward (with whom he still works regularly), the front of his collaboration being the *Third World Underground LP* on Trio. He also recorded a couple of breezy big-band LPs – *African Space Programme*, *The Journey* – on which New Music luminaries like Hamiet Bluiett, Enrico Rava and Sonny Fortune shake the house with their blowing.

Ibrahim, too, was extending his resources, added soprano sax and flute to his distinctive piano. In recent years he seems to have drawn all these musical strands together, transmuting the separate elements into a new, darting lyricism that's all-pervasive on records like *Zimbabwe* and *Ekaya*. Perhaps because he's now based in New York again, Eighties' LPs like *Duke's Memories*, *Zimbabwe* and the solo *African Dawn* show the re-emergence of Ellington and Monk as primary influences, both in the use of their tunes and in what sounds to me like Ibrahim's growing complexity as pianist and composer. His playing is spikier now, the melodies strung with acidic frills: and the swaying grace of 'Sotho Blue' or the sheer beautiful risk of 'For Coltrane No II' reveal a music that's deft, airy, yet richly individual.

His most sought-after music, though, dates from the mid-Seventies: the South African recordings like *Soweto* and the legendary *Mannenberg* (soon to be distributed in the UK by IMS) are still phenomenally popular. It's a bitter irony that, at first, no record company would touch *Mannenberg*.

"What happened with *Mannenberg*," says Ibrahim, his face tensing with anger, "is... like, over the years we've been wanting to record our own music and the record companies have always told us, no you can't. The record companies are white-controlled, right, so they tell us, the people won't buy this, it's too primitive."

Mannenberg was actually recorded during a break in a studio session when Ibrahim began playing around on an old upright piano whose honky-tonk sound he liked. When no record company wanted to release that particular tape, Ibrahim made some acetates himself and played the disc in a little record shop near the Johannesburg bus terminal. Within a week, he'd sold 5000 copies over the counter and the LP, whose appearance had coincided with the 1976 uprisings became synonymous with the freedom struggle.

APARTHEID HORRORS

In 1976, Ibrahim organised a South African jazz festival that totally contravened government apartheid regulations. A few days later, he slipped out of the country and he has never been back. He was, he adds, already in trouble with the authorities for refusing to appear on the country's apartheid TV network – one station for whites, one for Blacks.

"I'm not interested in those divisions," he sighs, "but there's nothing you can do. If you become a commercial success in South Africa, they're going to try and use you, make you pay homage to the system. The moment you become visible, you have no choice. The system drives you into the arms of the revolution: either that or you stop playing. You leave the

country or you stop playing. There's no other way to deal with it.'

The year 1976, he explains, was a turning point in South African politics.

'The '76 uprising was so widespread, it swept the whole country. It was then that people began to understand that the end of dialogue had come: over 600 people shot dead, unarmed children. ... So when we left in '76, the ANC asked us to play a more vocal role and we accepted. Dialogue was finished and it seemed to me that the only solution was that we have to free ourselves through armed struggle.'

You said earlier that you were a cultural freedom fighter. Can you explain that? What do you see as the function of your music in the struggle?

Ibrahim sips his tea thoughtfully, then speaks with a quiet vigour. 'You see, the regime calls us terrorists. I look at my mother, she doesn't look like a terrorist to me, a very gentle, very beautiful woman. I look at her, I look at my grandmother, my great grandmother, my great grandfather, I look around and I see my family. ... you know, Duke Ellington said, "I was raised in the palm of the hand of the very best people in the land - my mother, my father, and love". This is where I come from.'

'They call us terrorists. We are being terrorised! Our doors are kicked open at four in the morning and our families dragged off to prison, never to be seen again. We are the ones who are stopped on the streets and asked for pass cards. We are the ones who are not allowed to go to their schools. We are the ones who suffer all these horrors. They are the terrorists.'

'Now the time has come. ... our president Oliver Tambo said this year that we have run out of cheeks to turn. That the time has come to say that Black people won't be the only ones to bleed. They call us terrorists, savages, that stereotype. So through the music we can show the gentleness of our people - and not just of our people, but of humanity. And the reality, the beauty of Allah's creation.'

'See, you don't have to read about a people or anything,' he laughs, 'just listen to their music and eat their food. Let the racists play their music and we'll play ours, and you can be the judge.'

SONGS OF FREEDOM

The day Abdullah Ibrahim flies out of Britain, the MCC vote against sending a cricket team to South Africa. That night on television, I watch a purple-faced Denis Compton, pro-tour spokesman, splutter that a battle has been lost but the war is just beginning. I remember Abdullah's words - 'Our people have been fighting the fascists for centuries' - and I know Compton is wrong. This war is an ancient war and, despite Compton or Thatcher or Botha or anyone, the war will be won because it must be won if there is to be any hope or dignity or value in living on this planet.

And I remember the first time I heard Abdullah Ibrahim play live, at Bracknell in 1982. On a late summer afternoon, with the festival marquee packed and keen with expectation, Ibrahim and Carlos Ward played some of the most incredibly beautiful and moving music I'll ever hear. By turns delicate, poignant, austere, the duo slipped from Monk to Ellington to traditional African songs, conjuring a resonance from the simplest tune.

As the set reached its climax, the atmosphere grew electric. People wept or punched the air, heads bowed, and yelled ANC slogans. Ward blew a lovely, wailing blues, then Ibrahim sang 'Tula Dubula', a freedom song which moves with gentle inexorability from the grief already paid to the promise of 'a new world a-coming'. Listening, dazed, to this piercing beauty, I felt my insides lurch and the next moment tears were streaming down my face, all control gone.

The set closed, a flute motif dancing lightly over the piano's grave rumbles, and the whole audience leapt to their feet, drained but ecstatic. The applause came like a cloudburst.

'There's a new world a-coming/Falseness will be gone/ They'll come a-marching into town at dawn/Singing songs of

freedom and laughing in the rain/Gone will be this old world, things won't be the same.'

PART 2.

THE MUSIC OF NO MIND

'The eternal spirit is the only reality.'

MARCH 1984. At 3 p.m. precisely I knock on the hotel-room door. To my surprise, someone on the inside knocks back. Bemused, I knock again and the door swings open. I step inside to find Abdullah Ibrahim, grinning from ear to ear, hiding behind the door.

'Hari!' he exclaims in his guttural, R-rolling accent.

For this meeting I've brought along two friends, musician Katy Zeserson and photographer Nick White, both keen Ibrahim fans. Abdullah, too, has a few mates with him and others drop in during the afternoon, plus more journalists and a constant stream of room-service people bringing teas and fruit juices for the visitors.

The resulting interview is very different from our earlier one. Rather than a sombre analysis of South African politics, the talk today is relaxed and expansive, and revolves mostly around Islam, to which Ibrahim became a convert in 1968 (changing his name from Dollar Brand) and which he discusses in an engaging manner - like the Muslim equivalent of a Zen master - mixing humour and off-beat anecdotes with the more serious stuff.

We begin by talking about his Camden Jazz Week concert of the previous evening. A planned duo with Max Roach had been cancelled the day before the gig when Roach was taken ill and reedsman Sam Rivers flew in as a last-minute replacement.

Ibrahim and Rivers had not played together before and had little time to rehearse. Was this not a problem? I ask.

Ibrahim frowns for a moment, then smiles. 'What did Ben Riley ask Monk? "Hey Monk, when are we going to rehearse?" Monk said, "Why? You wanna learn how to cheat?"' He breaks into delighted guffaws, as he will do throughout the afternoon.

You don't rehearse much? asks Katy, when order is restored.

'I don't know where this thing about rehearsal comes from,' Ibrahim muses. 'I think it comes from the assumption that the things we do are not really in the service of the Almighty. I mean, how are you going to rehearse a prayer? Either you pray or you don't; you don't say, "Hang on, God, I'm gonna have a rehearsal here." Like, even with a swordsman, every cut he makes is a prayer.'

Hmm. I ask how his conversion to Islam had originally come about.

He smiles. 'Well, we are all convertible.'

But why you? Why then?

'I think we cannot really question the when. That is up to the Creator. All things come through grace, there's nothing you can do about it. We don't make Muslims, you know, Allah makes Muslims. And when you realise that whatever comes to you comes through grace, then you become tolerant. When we do not understand grace, that is the reason we become intolerant.'

But you wouldn't be tolerant of, say, the South African government. Isn't there a difference?

'That's right,' Ibrahim nods. 'Allah says, it is incumbent on you to speak up against injustice wherever it exists, otherwise you become part of it. Allah says the only reason we have created life and death is to see who among you are more truthful than others. Do you really say what you believe, believe what you say?'

'Now comes the question of choosing your company. See, the only reason you get in a mess is because of the company you keep. You may say, I don't feel satisfied with this

FESTIVALS I

Anthony Wood packs his bedroll and buffalo sandals and hightails it to Moers, where he encounters La Marmite Infernale and many other musical delicacies.

THE summer festival season always offers large quantities of musicians and the music to go with them, Europe sags under the weight of endless package tours of performing players trekking from country to country open air stage to concert hall, earnestly following their time-honoured right to earn a living.

A quick glance at the festival listings in the magazines of four languages and you could be forgiven for thinking that they are all one gigantic event set down in different locations rather like a circus big top, such is the regularity with which certain names appear. Most festivals offer little in the way of artistic direction, sign em up push em on stage and pray for good weather, small losses and happy sponsors.

Moers is not quite like that. For a start, what other festival would have Steve Beresford and The Art Ensemble Of Chicago on stage the same evening? Need I say more? Well yes, because that's only part of the story. First some background. The small German town of Moers, near the Dutch border, started its festival in 1972 when a small group of musicians staged a small event in the grounds of an equally small castle. The festival remained there, year by year, until in 1976 it was forced to move to a larger, fenced arena in the town park (or Schosspark as they say in Germany).

My own affair with Moers started in 1977 when a news item on *Melody Maker's* jazz page (remember that?) had me loading up my two-wheeled BMW and scooting across the channel double-quick. The bill was mouth-watering: Art Ensemble, Air, Amina Myers (then an unknown in Lester Bowie's band) and Globe Unity Orchestra, all groups that had yet to grace our cultural offshore island. As were the scenes which met my gaze when I arrived - 5000 people sizzling while The Art Ensemble burned! They refused an encore and nearly caused a riot.

But the musically-fed 5000 all seemed to be long-flaxon-haired waifs with cheese-cloth shirts, water buffalo sandals and beads, who spent their early waking hours in front of their tents, strumming guitars and following numerous other pursuits not generally associated with jazz festivals. Was it Moers '77 or Woodstock '67? I had my doubts until Aylerish squeals and some 'Traned' soprano confirmed that it was indeed a jazz festival.

The year 1977 proved to be the extent of the festival's numerical growth, then parched grass gave way to a muddy bog in two successive years, with a resulting drop in the audience. However, even the monsoon years produced some unforgettable moments; 1978 - 200 of us huddled under polythene sheets in a sea of mud at 11 a.m. listening to George Lewis and Douglas Ewart; 1979 - Sun Ra and Orchestra in full flight, with flashes of lightning right on cue (to this day Mr Ra still claims responsibility). But by 1982, faced with mounting bills from the town for repairs to the park, the festival sought shelter from the elements in the local indoor ice-skating rink, where it now has permanent residence.

Out of the original group of organisers one man emerged as the festival's mentor and leading light, Burkhard Hennen. Mr Hennen has followed in the well-worn footsteps of all festival organisers/artistic directors, ie the person you praise for pulling off a brilliant stroke of artistic billing and tear apart

when things fall flat. Hennen has also suffered from promoter's lapses or, more accurately, musical obsessions which have incurred the wrath of dissenting musicians.

Certainly the festival's preoccupation with the American free jazz scene in the late Seventies, at the expense of equally good if not superior Europeans, gave some credence to this argument. Some of the founding fathers of European free jazz looked on with dismay - and sometimes bitterness - at the monster Moers seemed to have become; but then how do you resolve the dilemma of satisfying a festival's need to grow for commercial reasons and balancing two opposing musical forces of equal worth, one of which will make money while the other won't?



Lester leaps in with the Art Ensemble

IRENA FORD



Rising sons from East Asia

IRENA FORD

Hennen's answer was simple and logical: split the festival into two parts; so the morning projects were created, away from the big top, in nearby schools. There, in the more relaxed atmosphere of a gymnasium, the more sensitively conceived music could be at home.

Not even an early start deterred the audience, 500 people at 11 a.m. for music which won't even draw 100 at 8 p.m. in London makes me positively drool with jealousy. Not surprisingly the projects have become an important factor in the festival's development; they have also thrown up individuals whose impact has seen them soon transferred to the main stage.

It was during the project's very first year that I witnessed that incomparable singer Diamanda Galas who, as they say, knocked shit out of me at ten paces! The intensity was enough to send me back to my tent to lie down for a couple of hours. Shrewdly Hennen transferred Diamanda to the main stage the following year, which suited her style better. Since then others have followed from gym floor to big top, including Fred Frith, John Zorn and Steve Beresford. Which brings us neatly back to Mr B and The Art Ensemble.

No, they didn't perform together. Beresford was part of a bright new band called GESTALT ET JIVE led by German saxophonist Alfred Harth (here last year on Actual 83 with Cassiber), who described the band as a continuation of the development of Sixties jazz and rock as heard through present day ears (or even the Fifties in the case of 'Guided Missiles', a doo-wop rendition by Beresford which sent the crowd mad). The ART ENSEMBLE OF CHICAGO have existed in their present form for nearly fifteen years and although they no

longer surprise they still delight. Their set was pretty well what was heard in London a couple of weeks before, with ROSCOE MITCHELL still showing the greatest creative edge, and this was further underlined later when at the unearthly stroke of noon he performed in the grounds of the castle with a female dancer of doubtful ability. However I almost changed my mind about this lady when, after disappearing from view with a fisherman's net over her head, a dog was seen to emerge from the same spot – a strike of artistic genius which might have even turned Merce Cunningham's head! I just closed my eyes and let Roscoe's soprano carry me into the afternoon.

Meantime, over in the gym, a bunch of invaders from New York were trading with heavy feet. THE MOSS MEN included percussionist & larynx operator David Moss, plus John Zorn, Fred Frith and Tom Cora, plus Christian Marclay, who extracted useful sounds from a record turntable, and Arto Lindsay on guitar and vocals (who defies comment except to say I'm not sure what he's doing but it seems to work). There are currently strong signals coming from offshoots of Material and The Golden Palominos which should not be ignored.

Mention of Material brings us to Bill Laswell who should have been on hand for a reunion of Massacre with Fred Frith and Anton Fiere, but wasn't, Mike Jagger's solo album taking precedence.

Back on the main stage DOLLAR BRAND tried another Indian rope trick. Having failed in London with Sam Rivers, he enticed LESTER BOWIE into his noose of heavy chords, but like Rivers Bowie got himself tied up in knots. Fortunately the majestic lyricism of CARLOS WARD was on hand to untangle the mess. Two ordinary saxophone quartets, one including ex-Blakey altoist Bobby Watson, likewise failed to move.

On the other hand three large monstrosities from France, Japan and Britain injected some vitality and fun. LA MARMITE INFERNALE, twelve men from Lyon engaged in mixing jazz with marches and satire without the latter imposing too much, and a splinter group THE WORKSHOP DE LYON drew big crowds to their morning workshop. Likewise EAST ASIA, twelve rising sons, brought forth 3000 smiles as they sped along a cultural highway that called at Osaka, Shanghai and finished in Madrid with an inscrutable tango. Even Woody Herman peeped out of the arrangements. For me East Asia won the band of the festival award, closely followed by TREVOR WAITS & MOIRE MUSIC who are surely the best thing to come out of our backyard for ages. Together with the aforementioned Moss Men, when they moved to the main stage for a more extrovert performance, these acts were highlights of this year's Moers.

In talking of the music I haven't mentioned women simply because out of over 200 musicians there were no women headlining and only two in the festival overall, a lamentable fact given the higher proportion of women involved in the music of today. Stylistically, though, the Moers festival is about as balanced as it's possible to get, this year especially representative of state of the art for most of what's happening today.

I say most because there are still gaps which need to be plugged – nobody from Russia so far, although there are moves afoot, and two very important names stand out through their total absence from thirteen years of Moers, Derek Bailey and Steve Lacy. Which, given their influence on the music presented over the years, is inexcusable.

Dear Burkhard, for next year can I make the following suggestions? A group led by Sergei Kuryokhin (if the Soviet authorities will permit it), Derek Bailey to organise a Company project, a group including Roger Turner, Phil Minton, Mike Cooper & Lol Coxhill, and on the main stage The Steve Lacy Sextet... Well, Burkhard?

Finally, some interesting facts and figures to dwell on. The town of Moers, about the same size as Wigan, provided the festival with about £10,000, the state contributed a further £6,000 and West German Radio £29,000. Total attendance 11,000.

For information about next year's Moers festival write to Stadt Moers – Kulturamt, Post Box No 21 29, 4130 Moers 1, West Germany



A TALE OF TWO FESTIVALS II

Leo Feigin travels to Le Mans and finds a pot-pourri of Poles, some soul-less Soviets and a jolly German drummer in a mixed bag of multi-national musics.



France's Michel Portal

PHOTOGRAPHS: IRENA POND



Gunter Sommer (Germany) and Sylvain Cassap (France)

THE president of the Le Mans Jazz Action, Armand Meignan, is a man of immaculate taste. He can be warmly congratulated for heading the most beautiful and most professionally-run festival I've ever visited. Le Mans Jazz Festival functions as precisely as a Swiss-made watch. On top of that it is delivered with panache and a touch of arrogant elegance for which the French are so renowned.

The Festival takes place outside Le Mans in a thirteenth century Abbey surrounded by beautiful lawns and flowerbeds. It is a place of interest and the beauty of the Abbey is uplifting enough even without hearing the music. The sound inside the Abbey is magnificent, and I am convinced that if record producers knew about the place they would flock there to record.

And what a marvellous idea to bring to Le Mans musicians from the USSR, East Germany, Poland and France to play some new, original, exciting music! And what a chance for music-lovers and musicians to check out what is happening with the music in all these countries, where it is not easy to check out anything.

However, from the very beginning Armand Meignan was hit by misfortunes and setbacks which were beyond his control. He invited Leonid Chizchik from the Soviet Union for a solo piano performance, plus Sergei Kuryokhin's big band, and the Ganelin trio. The Soviet Ministry of Culture refused Kuryokhin's big band and the Ganelin trio, and suggested the octet called Allegro instead. After some hesitation Armand Meignan decided to accept the offer. Having heard the performance of Allegro he might have regretted his decision.

Secondly, what is good for one festival might be fatal for another. Good weather, for example, could provide a total success for Bracknell. The weather in Le Mans was beautiful, not a cloud in the sky, and for Le Mans' festival it happened to be a near disaster. The hall of the Abbey was never overcrowded and most of the time it was half full.

The idea of Le Mans Festival is to present creative, original music, devoid of banality and commercialism. The impressive line-up included the names of Gunter Sommer, Leonid Chizchik, Tomasz Stanko, Zbigniew Namyslowski, Ulrich Gumpert, Michel Portal and many others. Le Mans does not limit itself to one particular idiom of music. It is trying to present music which embraces many historical styles: bebop, hard bop, jazz-rock, free jazz. From this point of view the festival succeeded. We did hear many different styles. As far as original and creative music is concerned, it didn't always happen.

The first prize for banality and commercialism must go to the Soviet group ALLEGRO, led by the pianist-keyboardist Nikolai Levinovski. His octet consists of highly professional musicians, who enjoyed great success at 1984 Jazz Yatra in India. They play powerful music, but their arrangements are slick, polished and devoid of any creativity. To play a note that deviates from their tight arrangements a musician would probably have to get the approval of the Central Committee of the Communist Party. They play jazz-rock-fusion of the most unattractive and unproductive kind - à la 1973 period. Yet, we must be grateful for their appearance in Le Mans, for they gave us an idea of



Poland's Tomasz Stanko

what Soviet entertainment is all about. This outdated music was totally out of place in the magnificence of the old Abbey, and the Soviet bureaucrats in the Ministry of Culture did Allegro a great disservice. It is very unlikely that after this performance Nikolai Levinovski's group will ever be invited to play in the West.

There was only one other band of the festival that could be compared to Allegro – the French LE MARVELOUS BAND, which was far from being marvellous. Contrary to Allegro, they substituted gimmicks for structures, but because they are not as professional as the Soviets, and occasionally play wrong notes (they don't have to ask for approval, they just can't play the right notes all the time) their music suddenly got an additional edge, which coupled with their enthusiasm, brought a cheerful response from the home crowd. I thought they had got together a couple of days before the performance, and the greatest surprise for me was to find out that they had been playing together for about eleven years and released several records.

LEONID CHIZCHIK of the Soviet Union was treated as a celebrity. He was extensively interviewed by the journalists, and his performance was filmed by French TV. To the horror of many journalists he announced that he was the best piano player of the Soviet Union, and indeed the whole of Europe. He might have been having fun, but the two interpreters were dead serious. As far as playing, and not talking, is concerned, Chizchik was very close to the truth. The trouble is that by playing he understands imitating and interpreting. He is a brilliant technician. Art Tatum, Earl Hines, Chick Corea, Keith Jarrett – he knows this shit inside out, and we had to hear it all again in his interpretation. What we did not hear was his own music, his own ideas, his own soul. Perhaps he hasn't got any.

The real thing came with the solo piano performance of SLAWOMIR KULPOWICZ from Poland. He is not as fast as Leonid Chizchik, but he possesses a strong touch and a powerful swing which he delivers with real feeling. On the last day of the festival he was the first to perform and his piano sounded crisp and bright in the cool air of the huge Abbey. Close to the end of his set the Monkish-Chopin bluesy theme with which he started his performance re-emerged, giving his set a sense of structure. He left us with the desire to hear more of this music, rooted in bebop, but coloured with tiny references to polkas and mazurkas that suddenly started to swing.

RAYMOND BONI was very unlucky to play his music of mist and sorrow at 4 o'clock on a sunny afternoon. He started with haunting sounds on the harmonica which were augmented by the two accordions of Octave Agobert and Celu Athienzer, and the saxophone of Andre Jaume. Several hours before the performance Boni shut his finger in a door, and it must have been extremely painful for him to play the guitar. However, he seemed to have forgotten about pain. Subtle rhythms, hints,

references to standards, for which Boni is so famous, started to emerge.

His music is soaked in Mediterranean feel. And yet, his elegant waltzes, full of sadness and sorrow, did not correspond to the bright sunshine breaking through the stained glass of the Abbey. During his first encore he broke two strings, and it would take him at least ten minutes to change the strings. So, there he stood, this gypsy of new music, listening to a storm of applause, unable to play more.

There were other high points of the festival, of course. Two more excellent guitar players both from East Germany 'arrived'. They are Uwe Kropinski and Helmut Sachse, who are members of the KONRAD BAUER QUARTET. The fourth member is Johannes Bauer, like Konrad a trombone player. Kropinski and Sachse use different guitars and different approaches to play them. Theirs is music of wit, sudden discoveries and humour. Both are virtuosos. Kropinski sometimes sounds like a whole band of Georgian drummers; Sachse, using electric guitar, manages to bend not only separate notes, but whole chords as well. Konrad Bauer took the technique of trombone playing a step further. He produces two sounds simultaneously, and couples this with circular breathing. It is amazing to watch.

ULRICH GUMPERT WORKSHOP BAND, also from East Germany, presented heavy, written compositions sounding sometimes like a cross between German cabaret and minimal music. As well as Ernst Ludwig Petrowsky and Johannes Bauer, Ulrich Gumpert has one more star in his band. Is it possible to make music with the help of a towel and two telephone directories? Yes, it is, but one has to be drummer Sven Ake Johansson. The leader himself delivered the most powerful, sensible, structured piano solo of the festival.

DIDIER LEVALLET presented his bass trio with Kent Carter and Joelle Leandre. His written, slightly artificial compositions lacked ease and spontaneity of execution. And though the bass trio was meant as a collective, Joelle Leandre completely dominated the show. When she starts singing while playing her bass she creates music of incomparable beauty.

Another musician who dominated the show was the drummer GUNTER SOMMER from East Germany. He was an addition to the French trio of Sylvain Kassap (reeds), Didier Levallet (bass), and Yves Robert (trombone). Gunter Sommer has reached a peak of maturity and artistry. Everything he does on stage is music. A turn of the head, a swing of the arm, becomes a sound. And what a relief to see a musician who doesn't hide his joy of making music. What a happy contrast to those who labour through their sets without knowing why they got to the stage in the first place! However, magnanimity is a quality of all great artists. He encouraged his French colleagues to play, he helped them to bring out the best they had, he made everybody happy.

The last day of the festival belonged almost exclusively to the Poles. On the whole, it was a boring day with little to remember except the piano player Slawomir Kulpowicz. ZBIGNIEW NAMYSLOWSKI seemed to have lost his fire and wit; STRING CONNECTION GROUP proved a cliché of outdated rock, and the duo of TOMASZ STANKO (trumpet) and TOMASZ SZUKALSKI (sax) was limping, without real inspiration.

The day was saved by MICHEL PORTAL UNIT: Michel Portal (reeds, accordion), Jean Louis Chauteemps (reeds), Daniel Humar (drums), JF Jenny Clark (bass), Tomasz Stanko (trumpet). It was Michel Portal, and his perfect command of the accordion, who brought the crowd to a standing ovation.

The music of the Unit consisted of a chain of episodes structured around short pre-arranged heads. This music encompassed many styles, from free playing to hard bop and French chansons. The changes of style brought with them corresponding changes of mood – from masses of sounds to lyrical, to sad, to humorous and sarcastic.

Theatrical elements play an important part in Portal's performance. They help him to play with the crowd and make the crowd feel what he wants. But he wouldn't be so effective without Jenny Clark. What a bass player!

For advance information for next year's Le Mans write to Le Mans Jazz Action, L.E.P., Rue des Collèges, 72230 Avonnes, France.

BARRY GUY:

A MOST INGENIOUS PARADOX

ONE OF the most vexed questions which has dogged improvisers has been that of the relationship between improvisation and composition. The arguments and debates have covered ground ranging from ethical and commercial considerations to the philosophical problems raised.

Can it be correct, for instance, that when a jazz soloist takes a 'standard' tune, applies all his creativity to reworking – recomposing – the themes almost beyond recognition, that the author of the first tune should retain all the credit – and royalties – as if his composition had just been trotted out dot-for-dot?

And in what ways do the two elements – improvisation and composition – interact, inhibit or illuminate each other?

Naturally the debate has raged with argument and counter-argument; and almost as many resolutions as participants have emerged. Notwithstanding the fact that stances adopted have sometimes seemed to shift with the passage of time.

These and other questions are begged not only by Barry Guy's whole career, which straddles both composed classical music and improvisation, but more centrally by the London Jazz Composers' Orchestra – the eighteen-strong improvisers' orchestra founded by Guy – where he meets them head on.

'I think, first of all, we're entertaining a paradox by combining improvisation with the written element,' states Guy, 'and it's intriguing for me to see how that paradox works itself out. It's an unstable chemistry in a way, and the catalyst in the experiment is the players. By their approach they can move the whole mass one way or another.'

'With the LJCO we try to find a homogenous language where instrumental facility is matched by a written vocabulary, but without trying to create "Third Stream" music. Recently we've also been working completely without scores, for example during some concerts in Angers last year, and recently in London, and the results were really very good.'

Thus, unlike Fred Frith, who has kept his improvised and composed work separate, having come to the conclusion that improvisation worked best in isolation, Guy is actively mating the two in the framework of the LJCO.

PITCHED HEADLONG

Guy established the LJCO in the early Seventies. 'We talked about it in Berlin in 1969. A lot of diverse people were playing together, and it was such a good time that I thought I'd like to write a composition which would include everyone and express those things. So I decided to put it together.'

Thus 'Ode' and the LJCO were born, to represent and embody the musical climate and scene he found about him.

It was a scene into which he had pitched himself headlong, and which he subsequently helped to shape. It was not one into which he had grown, like so many of his contemporaries. In fact, it was not until relatively late that he had taken up the bass at all.

When he left school Guy combined work in an architect's office with learning the bass and attending composition classes at Goldsmith's College. He was also playing Benny Goodman numbers in working men's clubs and, later, bebop in Dave Holdsworth's Sextet. Graduation to the nascent improvised music scene followed quite promptly. A composition Guy had written featuring trombone took him to Paul Rutherford, and through him Guy met Trevor Watts and John Stevens and received an invitation to join them at the Little Theatre Club.

At the Little Theatre Club Guy joined SME (the Spontaneous Music Ensemble), and when Ronnie Scott's Club moved to Frith Street he began work there too in the resident rhythm section.

In his own words, 'I seemed to spend my whole time commuting backwards and forwards between the Little Theatre Club and Ronnie Scott's.'

Guy enrolled as a member of Amalgam (with Watts and Rutherford when all three left SME), Howard Riley's various trios, began a long association with Tony Oxley and was a regular participant in Bob Downes' ensembles, including those providing music for the London Contemporary Dance Theatre.

At the Stockwell Plough sessions, Guy was re-united with John Stevens; here fresh impetus was given to one particular sub-group from the Musicians' Co-op, an organisation in which Guy had also been involved. It also made manifest a music which has, despite the spare transparency of his early work with SME and subsequently at times with both Iskra 1903 and the Parker Quintet, become integrally associated with Guy's playing. It is one charged with urgency and noteworthy for the density of material.

'I started playing very late,' Guy explains, 'and there was a great urgency to learn and catch up. This urgency was characterized in the people I associated with, and I've tended to work with these people ever since. I find my greatest spontaneity and creative sense manifests itself with people who work at that sort of speed.'

SEPARATE SPHERES

During the late Sixties Guy spent four years studying at the Guildhall School of Music.

'I didn't know much about classical music at all before I studied there,' he comments, 'my introduction to classical music had been Stravinsky's "Rite of Spring" and Penderecki's "Threnody To The Victims Of Hiroshima"'. So I was working backwards through classical music and discovering as I went. Then, about the time I left Guildhall, there were quite a few small chamber orchestras starting up. It was a very optimistic time. I ended up as principal bass with about four of them, tearing from one to the next.'

Generally Guy regards his work in the 'classical' and 'improvised music' spheres as two separate areas of activity. Two different worlds, in fact, revolving around his bass at the centre; two words with different languages and different challenges, yet both concerned on a personal level with investigation and communication. But in the LJCO he draws on compositional elements of the classical tradition and attempts to combine them with the expressive power and organic strength of improvisation.

'With the LJCO I'm interested in composition, not in a dictatorial way, but as a "social framework" for the players. But in writing for classical orchestras, or string quartets, I take another line. They expect the composer to be responsible for all the music that emerges, so I don't include improvisation any more, although I did at one time. I do try to express spontaneity within that written music, although I'm definitely not trying to "write improvisation".'

'When I'm writing for a classical group or orchestra I have a particular sound I'm aiming for, but with the LJCO I see faces. For instance, for the tune I used as a coda for "Polymymnia" at the Place concert, I sat at the piano, heard the way Trevor (Watts) plays a ballad and just wrote it.'



MÅRIN KUORIKAINEN

'In the old days I used to use tone rows and things like that, but now I realise that in a way it's superfluous with the LJCO. It's actually to do with areas and textures we understand better intuitively.'

However, an understanding of the role of composed structures within the context of the LJCO was not something of which Guy was automatically aware. In fact he is still exploring their use, although he has learned from experience.

'Ode' was the first piece, and it covered a lot of areas and directions. That was an experiment for me as much as for everybody else – to see the response to different structures. Since I was enormously impressed with how everybody dealt with them I very enthusiastically thought, 'Let's carry on with that'.

The scores got more and more complex and I gradually became aware of people getting more and more frustrated. I wasn't immediately aware of this because I knew the music quite intimately and I was also fairly adept at going from score to improvisation and back again, but I got wind of a gradual feeling that 'this is impossible', and that was reflected in people leaving, of course.

'You learn all the time... if you make a score too simple then sometimes the musicians don't like it because, in a way, you're relying on improvising musicians to make – or complete – your score, one that might have very little thought behind it. But if you go to the other extreme, and make it very complex, then

people feel hemmed in and don't feel that there's enough room left to improvise at all. That has a rather stultifying effect. So what I'm trying to do is to liberate the score in such a way that the guys can actually feel free within the structure, and add whatever their contribution is.

'After "Ode" I moved away from writing tunes and concentrated more on writing textures. In a way these were a reflection of the direction in which our improvising was moving away, with its density and complexity. I was hearing a lot of that and started incorporating it into the scores – trying to provide and reflect the material of and for the improvisation. It's a paradoxical mixture.

Four or five years ago I cut the band down so that it contained all improvisers, I simplified the scores and gave a lot of responsibility to individual players to control sections and instigate movements. I think that by working in this way quite a good feeling began to emerge – "We're doing this as a group".

'Then, last year – at the Angers Festival – I eventually said, "Let's do a group improvisation". And it was marvellous. That collective spirit of working together transferred itself into a completely open situation. People listened to the sonorities and timbres of the whole band; everyone entered into the improvisation and was very controlled (which isn't to say that they were timid).'

SOCIAL STRUCTURES

Speaking generally of large ensemble free improvisation and the LJCO's position relative to that, Guy continued: 'With large group improvisation there's often a lack of responsibility by some members. Either through just dropping out, being lazy or apathetic, or by being thoroughly brutal and virtually destroying it, saying "Well, it's my spot now", and forcing space for it regardless.

'What's happening now with the LJCO has far more understanding of large group improvisation and of other members' contributions. I wouldn't be interested in the LJCO as just a vehicle for soloists, and all the indications are that there's a group commitment to improvisation which is very different to that.'

Guy is not the only musician composing for the LJCO; Tony Oxley, Howard Riley, Kenny Wheeler and John Stevens have all provided scores (in Oxley's case a graphic score). Buxton Orr wrote a piece during his time as a conductor. But outside of the LJCO structure only Bernard Rands has composed for them, although they have also performed Penderecki's 'Actions'.

Guy was anxious to expand this circle by commissioning, initially, George Lewis and Anthony Braxton to compose works; both have written for large orchestras and have performed alongside members of the LJCO, but an application for funds from the Arts Council to enable these commissions to go ahead was turned down.

Similarly, Guy has also always been keen to spread the weight of authority and responsibility within the orchestra; a parallel development to that of spreading the compositional load and encouraging a musical egalitarianism through his composed structures.

'I've always aimed to create a community of musicians,' he states, 'where the direction could be determined by the members of the band. I've always tried to avoid the things of Barry Guy's LJCO, because I've always considered myself to be just one of the musicians.

'In the early days I think there was always a certain amount of flippancy. The LJCO was regarded as a curious animal to come and make music in. But I realised that it would involve a very long-term effort on everybody's part. I don't see it as a one or two year project. I also wanted the band to work often enough for these changes to manifest themselves in a very strong way, where people would say, "We don't want to do that – we want to do this". That's hard when you haven't got many gigs.

'It's as much a social structure as a musical body; because of that the music is often particularly fine. Especially the last two gigs we've had – they've been triumphs for hard work and musical resolve.'

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Michel Petrucciani: Hearts Are Trumps

FRENCH pianist Michel Petrucciani got the biggest hand of the night at London's JVC/Capital Jazz Parade this summer. He usually does, and for all the wrong reasons, but it was glaringly obvious that even on an evening including Dizzy Gillespie, James Moody, Freddie Hubbard and Joe Henderson, Petrucciani was the one who was going for broke.

Audiences applaud him for being three-feet tall, fifty pounds weight, and doing anything. He has a condition known popularly as glass bones, and has to be carried back and forth to the piano stool, usually by his New Mexico wife or his manager. Miraculously, his hands are unaffected. The jazz fan's interest in Petrucciani, however, coincides with his own: the music.

He was born in Orange in the South of France in 1962 into a musical family, moving to California in 1981 after playing with cats like Max Roach and Clark Terry in Europe. Charles Lloyd, inactive for some years since his success in the flower-power Sixties, heard the young pianist and was so impressed that he formed a combo around him, and appeared at Montreux. Since then, Petrucciani has been in great demand as a sideman and has a healthy booking schedule for his trio.

'I have a very expensive trio. I say that because the drummer, Elliott Zigmund, is in New York; the bass-player, Palle Danielsson, lives in Stockholm; and I live in Big Sur, so when we travel together it costs a lotta money. After this tour with the Freddie Hubbard All Stars, which ends in Japan, I'm doing a tour with my trio, ending with the Fall festivals in Europe.'

Already, he speaks jazz American. Here and there, you can hear a French emphasis - El-LING-ton, for example, the man who inspired him to play jazz piano when he was four. Bill Evans, however, is his compass.

'Oh, I think he was one of the very few musicians who kept going to what he was and he really insisted on his style. Never tried to change it - against all the critics who thought he was too romantic or whatever. Too quiet. I respect him a lot for that - but, also, he was one of the few musicians who touch my heart. John Coltrane, Bird, they also made me feel something different.'

He puts great emphasis on emotional



impact, on touching the heart. His latest album, *100 Hearts* (The George Wein Collection, Concord Records), achieves that in places. He would not advance a greater claim for his talents at the moment.

'I tell ya, there are so many things to discover on the piano itself that for me, I think I'll be dead before I discover one third of what I really should be able to do. I play tunes for eighteen years and I dream, and I still find new things on it. I played "St Thomas" on the album. Maybe Sonny will come with a machine gun, say "Watcha do with my tune?". "Turnaround" was one of Charlie Haden's favourite tunes. We worked together in duet for about three weeks in California and I played it almost every day with him, so I also recorded that.'

He breaks off the interview at points to chip into the general conversation going on between Joe Henderson and Freddie Hubbard in the hotel lobby. The avant-garde? You know what's the latest with

the avant-garde now? It's going back to the old stuff.'

Since his move to the States, he has been awarded the Prix Django Reinhardt by France and voted Best European Jazz Musician in Italy. Sometimes you have to split and come back to be taken seriously; El Clinto for example.

'I'm not trying to say Europe is no good but the States, as far as records are concerned, have bigger budgets and a lotta things like the RCA studios. I went to Paris when I was sixteen. I had a lotta problems. The mentality is very blasé. Everything is very centralized on Paris and if you don't come from Paris, there's no way that you're gonna make it.'

'If you come from the South, like I did, everybody makes fun of you because your accent is different, because you don't know anything about the night-life. When I come back now they say - "Oh, the American's back!".'

Brian Case

Don Lanphere



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'All Praise be to God To Whom All Praise is due' — so opens Coltrane's own written message to the listener on the sleeve of this LP. And let there be no mistake — this record, recorded by Coltrane and his perfect quartet on 10 December 1964, is a passionate hymn of praise to God in the guise of creator and guiding spirit. As such it is one of the true peaks in a career littered with momentous achievements, both as a sideman (*Kind of Blue*; *Monk & Trane*) and as a leader (*Giant Steps*, *Impressions*, *Meditations*, *Expression*).

On its initial release on Impulse Records, early in 1965, *A Love Supreme* was immediately perceived by all observers to be one of the definitive jazz recordings. The passage of time has done nothing to diminish that assessment.

That Coltrane produced this music when he did was no random event, a number of compelling forces in his artistic and personal life had brought him to this point. First, he had now been working with this quartet more or less in its present line-up since 1960, and the cohesiveness of musical statement collectively reached within the unit had virtually reached telepathic levels.

For most of 1964 Coltrane had been working on distilling the essence of his musical advances through the previous four years, deepening and broadening his awesome technical and emotional range. He had been in the forefront of jazz since

his days with Miles Davis and listened with keen interest to the first steps being taken by the musicians of the next generation in the direction of more musical freedom, soon he was to embrace publicly and encourage them and their methods. *A Love Supreme* is, in a real sense, a summation of all which had gone before in his music and an indication of future concerns.

But perhaps one event more than any other had put him on to this road: the death, in June 1964, of his close friend and musical companion, Eric Dolphy. As Trane writes in his introduction, 'I do perceive and have been duly re-informed of HIS OMNIPOTENCE, and of our need for, and dependence on HIM.' This was Trane's first recording session since that date and it is a forthright musical reply to tragedy, loss, and pain: a joyous celebration of the God-given ability to triumph over all adversity. It is fitting that the music closes to the words 'ELATION — ELEGANCE — EXALTATION — all from God; thank you God. A Love Supreme.'

It's important to stress this spiritual foundation for the music, for to Coltrane it was an ever-present concern, as his liner-note makes abundantly clear. For that reason, a few words are needed describing the packaging in which *A Love Supreme* was originally released.

It had a gatefold sleeve, as did all Impulse records, and it had the present front cover picture (Coltrane's favourite of himself) and wording on both back and front covers. Inside the gatefold

there was the charcoal drawing by Victor Kalin which now graces the present record's back sleeve, and the address by Coltrane to the listener running down its left-hand side. So far, so good, unless you buy the present-day cassette, which has merely the front cover, track listing and production credits. It doesn't even list the personnel. But what no current issue of the record in the UK carries is the poem, also written by Coltrane, which occupied the second half of the original gatefold inner. This poem, titled *A Love Supreme*, is a simple and heart-felt hymn to God. The fourth and last section of the music, 'Psalm', is a literal note-for-word rendering by Coltrane of this poem on the tenor sax.

The four parts of *A Love Supreme*, which Coltrane looked upon as forming a suite, are closely related and thoughtfully planned. Parts I and II are linked by a solo bass bridge, as are Parts III and IV. There are two parts per side, allowing a natural break at the end of Side One, and a natural conclusion at the end of Side Two. Each solo by Trane or another member of the group has been placed in advance so that it adds to the natural evolution of the work as a whole. Thus Garrison's two solos each set the mood for the following section, and McCoy Tyner's two piano solos are used to give a necessary dramatic balance to the two faster-tempo sections. And Elvin Jones, apart from providing fire, excitement and constant rhythmic invention in a truly magnificent supporting performance throughout, opens Part II, and so Side Two, with a telling drum solo which perfectly established the mood of the piece to come.

But all this planning, and all these good intentions, would have come to nothing if Coltrane hadn't been particularly inspired in his own solo work that day. From the opening arpeggio fanfare, paraphrasing the 'a love supreme', or 'all praise to God' motif, it is clear that Coltrane is bringing all his intensity of commitment to bear. By the time he has completed his first solo, on 'Acknowledgement', over the hypnotic four-note rhythm-pattern, the highest levels of inspiration have already been reached. For this is simply one of his greatest-ever recorded solos, breathtaking in construction, conception and execution. He teases at, dissects and remoulds a handful of little rhythmic devices, building to an overpowering climax high on the tenor, then falling away to the vocal chant which precedes the end of Part I and which is an explicit acknowledgement of the music's purpose. So ends one of the most moving and beautiful solos in jazz.

There are many marvels such as this within these four movements and it is up to the individual listener to locate them, each man in the quartet contributes mightily to the successful sustaining of mood and intent through all four Parts. But, clearly, the voice of Coltrane's tenor dominates the music.

It has become fashionable in recent years to doubt the validity of the music of Trane's last period, from this record up to his death; it has been labelled repetitive, confused, pretentious and even hysterical by some. *A Love Supreme* has been named as the point where he began to overreach himself, after all, he was now directly addressing God, it is said.

Surely such arguments simply miss the point: what we have here is a beautifully proportioned, dignified and passionate work, inspired by and dedicated to a spiritual progenitor — it is a hymn of praise, offered in joy and humility to every one of us ready to listen, whatever our spiritual state may be.

As Amin Baraka (Le Roi Jones) once so memorably wrote: 'There is a dawning human quality to John Coltrane's music that makes itself felt, wherever he records. If you can hear, this music will make you think of a lot of word and wonderful things. You might even become one of them.'

Keith Shadwick

Miles Davis

Concert Review Royal Festival Hall, London - 17 July 1984

APPRECIATION of Miles Davis is all too often obscured in myth: he turns his back on audiences. He is aloof. He insults sidemen by walking off during their solos. He appears without playing a note. He only dishes out 'rock' type hype to soften up his younger followers before playing what he really wants to play - soulful ballads.

But like most myths, a different perspective can instead reveal the stuff of legend.

Miles Davis drifted into London for three performances in July. Two were back-to-back performances at the Royal Festival Hall for the JVC/Capitol Jazz Parade. The third came courtesy of BBC2's *Jazz on a Summer's Day* screening of a 1959 clip of the legendary quintet featuring John Coltrane.

For those who care to bask in mythology, Davis delivered the goods to his UK audiences. But he also gave, as he has always done, a host of signposts as to what he was really up to.

Let's start with the famous 'turns his

back on the audience' one. I can only assume that the purveyors of this particular myth over the years have been sitting in the wrong seats. Had they been exiled to a peer-through-the-spotlights side-box, - or, better yet, the cheap seats behind the stage - they might have discovered what Davis was really up to. He turns not away from the audience, but to his band. He is listening. Adjusting. Before turning back to take the music in a different direction.

On stage, Miles Davis is there to deliver music. When things are going well he can also, and did at the Festival Hall, draw in the audience and even clown with the photographers.

Miles Davis has been playing since the Forties. In the more than forty years he has graced our stages and our record-players, he has been involved in numerous radical redirections of jazz. Here, for example, is the musician who both created and destroyed 'cool jazz'. Whose quintets for ten years set the pace in what was next in jazz. And who allowed rock into the music without deserting it. But, as he so amply demonstrated at the



PHOTOGRAPH BY JOHN WHITE

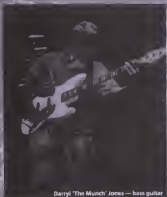
Festival Hall, he has expanded both the breadth and numbers of his followers whilst, at the same time, retaining the veterans amongst their ranks.

Yes, he opened his Festival Hall session with a loud, heavily amplified series of pieces from the latest direction he has taken his music. And yes, he tended over the course of the concert to increase the number of soulful ballads. But he lost no-one on the way. A long-standing fan of the quintet period, lovingly served by the BBC clip, could not make much of a case for claiming that the Miles Davis of 1984 was dishing up an inferior performance to that of 1959. (Although a case can be made for levelling this accusation at certain members of his band.)

Davis is now playing in a fuller range of registers. It was notable at his live concert how often he was in a higher register than his famous middle register but he had plenty of that, too. Personally, I thought what I heard that night at Festival Hall was, if anything, a better performance from Davis than I have on record from any period. But then, it was a synthesis of all those periods and styles that went before, not a pastiche directed randomly at the distinct sectors of his heterogeneous audience.

Anyone who has heard the wonderful Davis renditions of 'One Day My Prince Will Come' or 'Bye, Bye Blackbird' will be hard pressed to say that it is a new venture for him to adapt the popular or commercial music of the day into his own style. It is a fine tradition practised so well by Billie Holiday and continued by John Coltrane.

But, you might argue, when Miles Davis went into rock music in the Sixties, it was a very different thing indeed from pinching pop songs for a jazz rendition. Really? I have never been terribly convinced by the argument that Miles Davis sold out to rock music to expand the commerciality of his music. Rock and soul were on the rise and so he put Herbie Hancock on to electric piano and



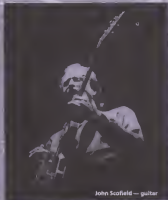
Derryl 'The Munch' Jones - bass guitar



Mino Cinelu - percussion



Robert Irving III - keyboards



John Scofield - guitar

in successive bands incorporated guitars and rock rhythms.

In so doing, Davis launched several schools of what is now rock influenced, very commercial – often boring – jazz. But not one of the groups treading this path has ever gone beyond Miles Davis, even bands led by veterans of his own line-ups. If his was only a good copy of rock music, others should have been able to do as well or better. Instead, Miles Davis – now playing a bit of synthesiser himself – can appear on stage twenty years later and still sound more original than the imitators despite the proliferation of lesser talents in his own band.

What Davis is doing is no different from a host of schooled veterans of the free jazz and improvised era of the Seventies. He delivers up a rich combination of the music's past, woven together by his own present. Would the soulful ballads stand out as much if they were not delivered against context set up by opening with a barrage of sound? I don't think so.

Emotionally, I feel that the same effect comes from a free player like Archie Shepp or Lester Bowie drifting from total improvisation into recognizable 'tunes' over the course of an evening. I may like their free playing more than the current Davis band but the overall impact is very similar.

Let me now turn to the bands. Miles Davis has a long history of playing with his peers, and like Mingus, of creating peers out of lesser-known sidemen. However, while Mingus carried on this tradition to the end, Davis seems to have retreated from this role in recent years. The issue of walking off during solos is illustrative. Davis, true to form, did just this in the TV clip during Coltrane's solo. But, when your band is as well peppered with talent as that one, why not give the whole show over to the likes of John Coltrane? I, for one, wasn't complaining.

But throughout the Festival Hall programme, we were subjected to what, lacking the technical term, I must call the steady loud bash drumming style of Al Foster. When he was silenced and the rhythm came instead from percussionist Steve Thornton, the interplay between Davis and the band leaped up. But the most rewarding work from his players came as Davis wandered around the stage engaging them in duets. Guitarist John Scofield responded particularly well to these encounters, none more notable than the ballad piece, a rendition of Cyndi Lauper's Top Twenty hit 'Time After Time'. (So much for dropping the pop stuff after the loud opening numbers.) And in a series of duos with bass guitarist Darryl Jones, the young bass-player came up with plenty of his own ideas. Here is a talent blooming with the old Davis magic. But the duos with sax-player Bob Berg did not fare so well nor did Berg's solos. Indeed, through much of the concert he was left holding his instrument waiting for the few moments he was allotted to play. Maybe



Branford Marsalis (yes, brother of Wynton, and beneficial contributor to the latest Davis album) is only available for record dates but, if so, perhaps Davis should find another peer to take the sax chair or drop the instrument from the stage line-up altogether.

The Miles Davis bands of not all that many years ago could more than hold their own when the leader was watching and listening. The band of today needs the leader to reach its best. And, despite his reputation he played almost constant-

ly, often taking the band and several of its individual members to their creative peaks.

After the last of many encores, as Davis walked off stage horn in one hand, grabbing for his walking stick with the other, I looked down at the fans swarming around the front of the stage and wrote in my notes 'you can't feel cheated, it was the right time to stop'. His life story in the music had just been delivered, as a package.

James Ball

CAB CALLOWAY
JUMPIN' JIVE
21115



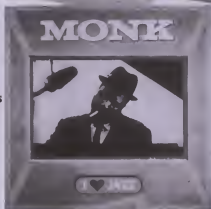
TOOTS THIELEMANS
HARMONICA JAZZ
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BENNY GOODMAN
BENNY GOODMAN
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THELONIOUS MONK
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I ♥ JAZZ
FROM
AVAILABLE ON ALL



MILES DAVIS
BLUE CHRISTMAS
21070



BUCK CLAYTON
JAM SESSION, VOL. 1
21112



HARRY JAMES & HIS ORCHESTRA
HARRY JAMES & HIS ORCHESTRA
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21113

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JAZZ

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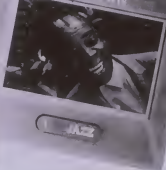
CHARLES
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RAY JAMES
ORCHESTRA
G BUDDY RICH



& HIS ORCHESTRA
& HIS ORCHESTRA
G BUDDY RICH
21105

LOUIS
ARMSTRONG
GREATEST HITS



LOUIS ARMSTRONG
GREATEST HITS
21058

SARAH VAUGHAN
SUMMERTIME



SARAH VAUGHAN
SUMMERTIME
21114



'POPS' FOSTER (1892-1969)



JIMMY BLANTON (1921-1942)

New Orleans is renowned for evolving the earliest method of group playing, as well as for producing the first great trumpeters and clarinetists. It is more rarely credited with being the hometown of the finest string bassists of the Twenties and Thirties.

Wellman Braud became the pivot of Duke Ellington's band, Al Morgan of Cab Calloway's; even Steve Brown, who gave the Jean Goldkette and Paul Whiteman Orchestras much of their spasmodic zing, originated in the Crescent City.

But it was 'Pops' Foster who typified the rhythmic vitality that a great New Orleans bass-player could bring to an ensemble, whether large or small. He was not renowned for elaborate solos; more for driving his colleagues onward.

The most powerful rhythm section around as the Twenties ended was Luis Russell's, which had Paul Barbarin on drums and 'Pops' Foster slapping his bass as much as he plucked it. Almost anything by that band demonstrates Foster's vivacity but look out especially for 'Jersey Lightning' and 'Panama'.

Some exceptional bass-players were around in the Thirties: John Kirby and Milt Hinton, paragons of a subtle, sophisticated new school, while Walter Page was a vital one-fourth of Count Basie's tightly meshed rhythm team. And, most extraordinary of all, Jimmy Blanton, who was working in and around St Louis when Duke Ellington recruited him in 1939.

Blanton died two years later, of tuberculosis, yet within that brief period the status of the bass-player had been raised and made more challenging. For Blanton side-stepped existing conventions, bringing to the bass a freedom and mobility it had never displayed before. It was not just a matter of deploying quavers and semiquavers as well as crotchets but the kind of harmonic cunning that was also penetrating jazz via the skills of Art Tatum and Charlie Christian and Lester Young.

Four duets with Duke Ellington, including the jaunty 'Pitter Panther Patter', were recorded in 1940. Ellington's band, of course, had always swung around the bass rather than the drums. And what Wellman Braud achieved so lustily a few years earlier, Blanton accomplished with a dizzier expertise in pieces such as 'Jack The Bear' and 'Ko-Ko'.



SCOTT LA FARO (1936-1961)

'Rotary perception' was a phrase Charles Mingus used at one period, suggesting – more or less – that a bass-player need not always sound explicit. The notion of time being implied as much as stated underlay the work of the more enterprising bassists of the 1960s. And of none more so than Scott La Faro, fated, like Jimmy Blanton, to die young (in his case in a car crash).

La Faro's baroque decoration sometimes sounded, once again, as if it was intended for a guitar rather than the bass. And behind his approach was a European tradition that had begun to buttress jazz bass playing (a surprising number of otherwise black avant-garde groups of that decade used white bassists: eg Charlie Haden and David Izenzon – a master of arco playing – with Ornette Coleman).

La Faro clarified and pointed the way ahead for a generation that would include Britain's Dave Holland. His playing first burst upon this writer's ears in *The Return Of Victor Feldman* (1958), but perhaps a more mature example is *Sunday At The Village Vanguard* by the Bill Evans Trio, the group which brought out the best and most intricate side of this musician.

7 S T E P S
TO JAZZ
BASS
BY CHARLES FOX



CHARLES MINGUS (1922–1979)

Charles Mingus's importance as a composer and bandleader, as well as the extravagance of his personality, sometimes obscured his place as one of the greatest and most influential bassists in jazz.

Brian Priestley, in his biography *Mingus* (1982), has analyzed the bassist's style at great length, pointing out how, even in his earliest work, there were double stops, octave leaps and a sub-dividing of the beat that had their effect upon bass-players who followed, and who in turn handed the message on to bass guitarists, in rock as much as in jazz.

Priestley also points out the way that Mingus, too, would pick with his right hand like a guitar player, going on to quote from another distinguished bassist, Percy Heath: 'Mingus was the first person I saw who used different fingers to play successive notes in a phrase'.

Mingus literally led his groups from behind the bass, dictating the approach to such passionate performances as 'Folk Forms No. 1'. Plenty of other splendid recordings could be cited, including 'Haitian Fight Song' (1957) and its remake, six years later, as 'II BS'.



OSCAR PETTIFORD (1922–1960)

Bebop meant that jazz became more elaborate. Yet, paradoxically, bebop bass-players often seemed pedestrian, especially when compared with the drummers, the real beneficiaries of the reshuffling of the rhythm section.

An exception was Oscar Pettiford, already showing symptoms of strong individuality even before he ran into Jimmy Blanton and before he became co-leader, with Dizzy Gillespie, of the first bebop group to play on 52nd Street. Pettiford expanded the bassist's scope, although his arco playing – like that of most of his predecessors and contemporaries – tended to be unreliable. But he could unleash pizzicato solos that had something of the melodic sprightliness associated with a guitarist such as Charlie Christian.

At the end of the Forties, Pettiford began using a cello as well, achieving even lighter and more nimble results. One of his greatest recordings also happens to be a classic example of Coleman Hawkins's tenor saxophone-playing: the 1943 version of 'The Man I Love' (it was also the first time a bass-player's breathing had been recorded with such fidelity).



RICHARD DAVIS (1930–)

Consolidation is as necessary, if less spectacular, than innovation. Bass players who synthesize contemporary discoveries, meanwhile fulfilling the functional role of keeping time and providing a harmonic backbone, are every bit as valuable as those who set out to amaze.

Ray Brown is one, his 'walking bass' patterns superbly relaxed and swinging. Another is Richard Davis, his sound as unmistakable as his presence is rhythmically stimulating. Davis has excelled in a variety of settings: in symphony orchestras (Stravinsky was one of his conductors), on film soundtracks and backing up singers such as Barbara Streisand, but most relevantly and creatively in jazz ensembles.

The pianist Andrew Hill has said of him that 'his technique doesn't overpower his imagination'. Whether ensconced inside the Thad Jones–Mel Lewis Big Band (he toured Russia with them in 1972) or on sessions with Roland Kirk or Booker Ervin or the Booker Little–Eric Dolphy group, Davis 'hangs loose', as the argot has it, while sounding authoritative.

Almost anything by those artists or ensembles show off his virtues. If in doubt, try *Thad Jones–Mel Lewis Live At The Village Vanguard*.

MIROSLAV VITOUS (1947–)

The seventh slot is always the stickiest. How can one leave out Charlie Haden or Ron Carter, Steve Swallow or Eddie Gomez, Johnny Dyan or Fred Hopkins?

Choosing Miroslav Vitous sews up a couple of important issues, as well as singling out a splendid musician. It signifies the way – already remarked upon – that Europe, and particularly the string tradition of Central Europe, has enriched the tradition of jazz bass playing. And it recognizes the emergence of the bass guitar, a valuable accessory once it was realized that the instrument needed playing like a guitar rather than a string bass.

Miroslav Vitous, born in Czechoslovakia, the winner of a scholarship to the Berklee School of Jazz in Boston, is one of this new breed of virtuosi – and at the same time a founder-member of the best-known fusion group, Weather Report. In their different ways, Barry Guy or George Mraz, Jaco Pastorius or Colin Hodgkinson, invite equal attention. But meanwhile try Vitous, either with the 1971 *Weather Report LP*, or, very recently, with his own group (including John Surman) in *Journey's End*.



QUARTET BOOKS

JAZZ/BLUES TITLES FROM QUARTET

B.B. KING – Charles Sawyer

The 'definitive blues/jazz biography' (Los Angeles Times). (Illustrated pb £4.95)

BILLIE'S BLUES – John Chilton

The first ever biography of the greatest jazz singer of the forties and fifties. (Illustrated pb £4.95)

BIRD LIVES! – Ross Russell

The magnificent and harrowing story of a towering talent poorly rewarded by a society that has too long brutalized its Black membership, told by a man who was often (as President of Dial Records) at the centre of the turmoil Charlie Parker created. (Illustrated pb £4.95)

BIX: MAN AND LEGEND – Richard Sudhalter & Philip R. Evans

A mammoth biography of a true legend of jazz, rich, dense and deeply felt. (Illustrated pb £3.25)

CLOSE ENOUGH FOR JAZZ – Mike Zwerin

The autobiography of 'the best jazz columnist at work today . . . a keen social observer' (Studs Terrell), the book moved Leonard Feather to remark: 'It makes you wish you were the author's closest friend'. (Illustrated hb £9.95)

DIZZY, TO BE OR NOT TO BOP – Dizzy Gillespie & Al Fraser

The autobiography of one of the true innovators of jazz. (Illustrated pb £8.95)

ENCYCLOPEDIA OF JAZZ – Leonard Feather

At last back in print!
'Indispensable' (John Hammond). (Illustrated pb £12.95)

JAZZ – Nat Hentoff & Albert McCarthy (eds)

A collection of learned and illuminating essays on all aspects of jazz, including New Orleans, ragtime, the Ellington style, Jelly Roll Morton, Charlie Parker, boogie-woogie, bebop and Chicago, assembled by two leading authorities on the music. (pb £2.95)

JAZZ IN BRITAIN 1919–50, A HISTORY OF – Jim Godbolt

A comprehensive survey, the first of its kind, of jazz from a purely British perspective – American influences, rhythm clubs, discographers, riverboat shuffles, Archer Street, the internecine warfare caused by bop. 'Enlivened throughout by the author's passion for the music itself' (George Melly). (Illustrated hb £14.95)

JAZZ PEOPLE – Val Wilmer

Portraits of the likes of Buck Clayton, Archie Shepp, Art Farmer, Cecil Taylor, Thelonious Monk, Clark Terry etc. (Illustrated pb £2.25)

JAZZ VOICES – Kitty Grime

A collection of interviews with jazz singers from Al Jarreau to Cleo Laine. (Illustrated hb £11.50)

MILES DAVIS – Ian Carr

A sympathetic but critical analysis of the most famous living jazzman. (Illustrated hb £13.50)

MINGUS – Brian Priestley

The definitive critical biography of one of the music's most exciting, controversial figures, with a comprehensive discography and musical examples. (Illustrated hb £13.95)

NOTES AND TONES – Al Taylor

A fulminatory account of the Black jazz musician as defined by him- or herself is provided by these musician-to-musician interviews. (Illustrated hb £11.95)

ROOTS OF THE BLUES – Samuel Charters

Both a musical exploration and a travelogue, the book traces Charters' attempt to discover the origins of the most influential popular art form of our time. 'A wonderful book' (Sunday Times). (Illustrated pb £3.95)

FORTHCOMING TITLES

HOT AIR, COOL MUSIC – Bruce Turner

The autobiography of one of Britain's most respected and best-loved jazz soloists. (October, Illustrated hb £9.95)

STORMY WEATHER – Linda Dahl

A comprehensive survey of the 'forgotten role' played by women in jazz history. (October, Illustrated hb £12.50)



In *The Wire's* book review slot, Willa Woolston appraises a collection of paintings by PIET KLAASSE, a master of the art of noise.

Jam Sessions by Piet Klaasse, Mark Gardner and J. Bernlef (Diederik Swarte).

BOOK REVIEW

AT LAST year's North Sea Jazz Festival, I noticed a wall of drawings in pencil, pastel, litho, of jazz musicians doing their thing. All big names, all playing, not one posed or made from a photograph. I was knocked out; they were dynamic, accurate, full of noise. Drawings by a 70-year-old Dutch artist named Piet Klaasse.

This year, they were everywhere – upstairs, downstairs, near the PWA Hall and, notably, in the press room. The reason for this became obvious on Friday night at 9.30 p.m. A book called *Jam Sessions* was launched, with the first copy presented, within a wall of photographers' backs (that was all I saw, until later) and flashing bulbs, to Dizzy Gillespie, who said, 'I'm overwhelmed'. He was then presented with an original drawing from the book, and he said, in his engaging drawl, 'I'm over-overwhelmed'. Very Dizzy, and so was the drawing.

Drawings of Dizzy figure three times in this excellent book. It is beautifully produced in appropriate, not lavish, colour; while many of the drawings are in black and white, those which are in colour are reproduced and printed so well that many of us could not distinguish them from the original without touching if they were not bound in a book. The texture and tone of the pastel or chalk or crayon or pencil is represented with elegant, telling accuracy.

The book consists of three distinct features which feed upon each other to give an impressionistic yet well-informed view of the many forms of jazz and the way they and the musicians developed over the decades. It's not an aficionado's book, it's a jazz lover's book. It's for those who love the music and the people who make it.

The book is 13½ x 9½ inches in size, with 192 pages, 132 drawings (79 of them full-page). There are roughly 113 pages of text by Mark Gardner, with chapter titles like 'The Instruments', 'Close-up on the Blues', 'The Jazz Life', giving a history of the evolution and surrounding circumstances of the jazz business. Interspersed with this, and neatly highlighted by being printed in a slightly smaller but still very readable Univers light typeface, are short but packed mini-bios of 66 musicians, not necessarily the same ones represented in the drawings – there is no bio of Buddy Tate, for example, but there is a drawing.

A further feature is a selective discography for each musician who is bio-described, termed 'Recommended Records', presumably Mark Gardner's top 1000. This would certainly



ly guide those of us who don't already know everything about all jazz musicians towards enlarging our experience.

Wonderful comments appear on the drawings in a musician's enthusiastic scrawl: 'To Pete, very good vision' (George Adams).

'There comes a period in the development of an artist when love "takes over". My friend, Piet Klaasse, has reached that level in his art' (Dizzy Gillespie). What better tribute – and well-deserved.

Ronald Shannon Jackson: 'Hey Piet, you capture rhythm, you capture life.'

And so he does. I've always hated the word 'capture' as applied to works of art. I do the same kind of work in London this man is doing in Holland – drawing musicians 'on the scene' (his phrase). It has to be fast, obviously, and you have to be tuned in to a very fine pitch, turned on to the music. You are responding more than capturing – photographs capture. With a pencil or a crayon on your hand, you're responding to the instrument almost in the same way they respond to each other. The pencil flies where the music leads.

Piet Klaasse has a quick, astoundingly sure technique, a confident line, a sense of colour where colour will enhance the harmony or say something about the musician. In black-and-white he is as sensitive as a solo balled by

Buddy Tate in a Texas Tenors set. He has a control of the marks which is as telling, as revealing of human passion as Joe Newman singing 'How Long Blues'. He is a jazz artist.

Often a drawing is in reality several drawings: the same player several times on a page, or on several instruments, or, for example, playing and singing, and each of these a good likeness and a good drawing.

He gives a visual feeling of the life involved in playing live music, of the energy, the noise, the concentration, the exuberance of a really swinging jazz gig.

Most of the drawings are captioned with a comment by the artist on the conditions of the concert or of the drawing, or an observation about the musician, or a comment by the musician about the drawing or about making music. Of Ornette Coleman: 'An angry man, angry music, a really angry manager. So I did it real fast. Later I showed it to Ornette. Without looking or saying a word he initialled it.'

Of Jimmy Raney: 'The expression of someone who drinks in his own music. He plays very internally.'

Of Mojo Buford: 'He's wearing a kind of sash. It turned out to be storage space for scores of different harmonicas. A kind of musical ammunition belt.'

Of B.B. King: 'Sometimes you are so carried away by the music that something slips in that's outside your conscious control. This one I made so fast that I wish I could have had a stopwatch just to see how fast.' And that is what I define as being a drawing of the solo more than of the man who made it. It happens to me, too. It's a unique experience. I take nothing away from the photographers in the way of credit for their craft but drawings like these communicate something that photographs never can.

There are amusing errors of spelling or syntax (wearisome, Percy Heath) which doubtless crept in during the editing but never do they intrude or distort. The production is impeccable. The only annoying feature is the lack of an index. The drawings are indexed but the mini-bios are not, and there was at least one cross-reference which was not page-referenced. I haven't found it yet.

In Holland the book was offered for f49.50. At that price in this country it would be c£12.40, truly amazing value for money. Let's watch for it.

Willa Woolston

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ON THE RECORD I: DRIVING FORCE: CADILLAC RECORDS

Eleven years old, good condition, one eccentric owner... That's CADILLAC RECORDS, whose John Jack takes John Fordham for a spin through his chequered history in the first of this issue's special two-part *On The Record*.

I HAD heard before I began to explore it, that you couldn't perambulate around the London jazz scene for very long without running into a man called John Jack.

This was 1971, when an expression like 'modern jazz' still had some currency, the old skirmishes between that and the vintage styles had not long died away, and you could still catch the odd jazz fan lurking about with a Lenny Bruce paperback sticking out of the pocket of a brown corduroy jacket. At first sight - at the Albion Music Club in Holland Park on a Mike Westbrook gig - John Jack seemed straight from the mould, but I later learned better.

He was quiet, a little hesitant, but given to expansive enthusiasms if encouraged. He had grey hair and a neat beard, but the eyes of a teenager, and his general demeanour put you in mind of a gentler Hemingway or maybe a Tom Keating. JJ's manner, though, gave him away. Despite the fact that he was a manager at the time - he was looking after the Westbrook band - and shoehorned into the role of a hustler in the most thankless of territories to hustle in, he was most obviously a romantic and an imaginative soul with a deep affection for both jazz music and painting, a profound though utterly unpedantic interest in the arts, and a distrust bordering on bewilderment - shared by many of the 'beat' generation of which he was unquestionably one - about conventional lifestyles, domesticity, ambition, future plans in general.

Nowadays John Jack is principally a record wholesaler, and the proprietor of a small independent record label - Cadillac Records - which had its first release in 1973 with some tapes that Westbrook couldn't persuade RCA to handle, and now maintains a steady flow of output embracing many varieties of new jazz.

As a dealer, John Jack imports some of the most exotic and unusual of jazz and jazz-related recordings from all over the world, notably Enja, JMS, Timeless and Circle, putting them out to a network of interested, and mostly similarly one-man-band outlets here and abroad. He is a classic example of what can be done by an enthusiast with low overheads to serve a dispersed community of similar souls.

His knowledge of the scene, both in Britain and abroad, is voluminous. He is unfussy about idiom, has admired the avant-garde increasingly with the years. It is all the more remarkable when you consider that he is fifty-one now, a one-time trad trombone player (hence 'JJ') who took lessons from Chris Barber and was at one time, as he puts it, an 'arch-traddy'.

He has an affinity for those places and times where people might have celebrated the higher forms of play and not perplexed themselves overmuch with anxiety about the ways of affording the trip between arrival and departure on this planet. It comes down to an affinity for the life of Paris's West Bank in its better days, a romanticism for the Forties and Fifties when Britain was still struggling out of the traumas of the war years. He embodies, in quiet ways, the downbeat optimism of artists everywhere. As a teenager, he thought he might aspire to being a 'tramp, or a prospector with a mule and a pack. I was a great lover of Westerns'.

John Jack was born in Queen Charlotte's Hospital in 1933, and lived in Barnes for most of his developing years. His father an engineer, a motor-racing fan and a racing skater, fell on hard times when the engineering firm that had been started as a conscription dodge by some rich businessmen to keep them out of the army during the war years was folded up when their cover was no longer necessary. His mother, who had been a sometime singer with dance bands in the Thirties, was the better hustler of the family.

John joined his father at the Richmond ice-rink to skate, and it was the first time he heard live jazz.

There was a tatty sextet of live musicians there - playing the hits of the day. And they played records as well. The first time I heard Kenton was down there, though I never got to like him until a few years ago. But the team I used to hang out with went to the cinema a lot as well. I remember seeing all the early Bunuels at a little cinema in Putney.

I joined the London Jazz Club - which was then run by two guys called the Wilcox brothers and Humphrey Lyttelton - in 1948. I used to talk it all over on the last bus coming home to Barnes, carrying a portable and old Bunk Johnson 78s which we'd been able to buy in the club.

The Worcester Park Jazz Club was another one - the Mick Mulligan-George Melly band used to play there on Wednesday nights. I started to get less and less interested in skating as an obsession and more and more interested in jazz. I wanted to play the soubaphone but that was denied houseroom, so I got a trombone.

We threw a lot of parties at home then, drinking a lot. When we had the African drums going you could start dogs barking as far away as the Bull's Head. Then one night a friend of mine came home who was a more serious junkie than I realised and when he went so did my mum's wedding ring and various other things. I left home under a cloud.

JJ spent the early Fifties in a variety of jobs. A teleprinter operator in the army during National Service, he did the same work for the wire service at the *Guardian*, sharing the office with several other jazz fans. They were loudly jamming on the wire-room balcony for four hours after news of the outbreak of the Korean war started coming in, and had to pretend the machine was broken to account for the *Guardian's* unfortunate tardiness in waking up to the story.

Later John went to work in Doug Dobell's Charing Cross

Road record shop – a Mecca in the jazz world at the time, albeit one in which the unwary or ill-educated visitor was conscious of that off-handed indifference with which experts used to put the arm on the unhip in those days.

He moved to managing altoist Bruce Turner immediately after the saxophonist left Humphrey Lyttelton (the boppish Turner's presence in the Lyttelton outfit had been one of the flashpoints of the civil war that had raged between traditionalists and modernists for years in the early Fifties. And later he managed a briefly successful skiffle group called The Vipers, which included at one time guitarists Jet Harris and Tony Meehan who survived the demise of the skiffle boom to become smouldering rock heroes – equally briefly – in an early incarnation of The Shadows.

When the skiffle craze ran out of steam, so did JJ's enthusiasm for managing bands and small scale entrepreneurship on the fringes of Tin Pan Alley. His health less than perfect and his energies sapped by the restlessly obsessional night-owl lifestyle of the hipsters and beats, he took off to Ibiza on Valentine's Day 1961, an army big-pack on his back full of Henry Miller novels and all the necessary accoutrements to follow in the footsteps of Picasso.

Ibiza was a thriving and largely unspoiled haven for bohemianism at the time but it didn't stay that way. JJ was soon on his way back across Europe again, staying for a while in the famous Parisian Beat Hotel that housed William Burroughs, Greg Corso and many other legendary names, then returning to England and the music scene.

Temporarily looking after the door at the Manor House in North London, he began tentatively to help The Rolling Stones. 'It died a death', JJ wistfully recalls. 'We knew what was the right thing. We were just six months too soon.'

Not many of the 'Bunk or bust' school of the early Fifties had soon easily made the transition to appreciating the virtues of life at the sharp end of the music, but John Jack was one, and it has given him a breadth of view and a comprehension of the richness of the music that has made his work as both a distributor and an occasional A & R man a valuable contribution to British jazz life.

JJ recalls the late Marty Feldman introducing him to modernism ('he insisted on taking me to the 51 Club on the modern night') but also fondly remembers harbouring a Sun Ra album guiltily in his collection for ten years before he was able to move in circles that would have much sympathy for it. When he took over the bookings at Ronnie Scott's old Gerrard Street Club (a venue which for eighteen months was a combined rehearsal room and concert outlet to all the most adventurous younger players – Mike Westbrook, John Surman, Chris McGregor, Dudu Pukwana and many others), John Jack discovered that there actually were practitioners of the art in his native land who not only understood the new jazz, but were actually playing it.

It was the association with Westbrook that took John Jack into the world of independent record production. He already knew the market well, from the years behind Doug Dobell's counter and periods as a travelling salesman for small labels like Esquire, Melodisc, 77 Records. Westbrook's rock-orientated small band Solid Gold Cadillac had not impressed the bandleader's then record company, RCA, so Westbrook and Jack decided to do it themselves.

The first Cadillac album featured its namesake live in concert in Tavistock and at the Phoenix, Cavendish Square. Soon afterwards, the great alto player Mike Osborne came to JJ with a tape of himself and Stan Tracey in duo performance. John Jack put up the money for the material costs ('I was making just enough from wholesaling at that time to be able to finance it') and they shared the profits. The ball was rolling.

Not all of the output of the Cadillac label has done so much business. None of it is likely to make JJ a rich man, and some titles have virtually sunk without trace; others have been steadily successful, like the partnerships he has had with the American saxophonist David Murray on that musician's recent visits here.

Does John Jack have a policy for what to pick and what to leave? Nothing simpler:

'My policy is, if I like it, I'll do it.'

It's a philosophy for which he has never lost affection. ■

ON THE RECORD II: METALINGUISTICS

Jason Weiss examines the rapidly expanding catalogue of the American West Coast label Metalanguage and traces the musical activities of founders Greg Goodman, Henry Kaiser and Rova's Larry Ochs.

'MUSIC IS our only path to the other world,' said an older Russian jazz critic recently.

He meant the West. He said it plainly in the still of the night in a parked car in Latvia. This happened in June 1983, and he was speaking with Larry Ochs of the Rova Saxophone Quartet, the Metalanguage recording artists who are the first American contemporary music group to perform in the USSR.

Formed in 1977 in the San Francisco area, Rova has already done seven tours of Europe. Two years ago Alexander Kan of Leningrad's Contemporary Music Club sent them a private



Diamonds Galles

invitation to perform in Russia, saying that the group was number one in the USSR Jazz Critics' Poll. However, there was no official funding available for such a trip.

Ochs, who is a co-founder of Metalanguage, and the other musicians of Rova – Jon Raskin, Andrew Voigt and Bruce Ackley – helped raise the money themselves (with Eva Soltes), and embarked on their twenty-day tour (ten in Russia, ten in Rumania) with an eighteen-member entourage that included poets, writers, photographers, a sound engineer, and a video crew (*Saxophone Diplomacy*, by the production group Ideas in Motion, will appear nationally on American public television later this year).

In Moscow, Leningrad and Riga, Rova drew enthusiastic audiences of up to 800 people. Word of mouth was usually the only publicity. Jazz, rock and classical musicians travelled long distances to see them, and the Rova musicians were the highlight of jam sessions at every stop, playing with such Soviet artists as pianist Sergei Kuryokhin and members of the Ganelin Trio. Their stay was so short, says Ochs, that there was no time for politics, every conversation got down quickly to the essentials: people and music.

The Rova members were overwhelmed by the warm, personal response of the Soviet public.

'Sometimes the emotional level was so intense,' says Ochs, 'that I had to walk away from it. It didn't make sense that people would be moved this much. It wasn't so much what we were doing, just the fact that we were there at all.' While in the United States, where work has never been abundant for them, Ochs explains, 'our music has been virtually ignored by the music establishment and the mass media.'

Situating the group's music is a big reason why many critics turn their backs, for Rova finds its inspiration in a wide range of musical sources, from Olivier Messiaen to Otis Redding to

Steve Lacy and beyond. Their sparkling synthesis of composed and improvised elements gives a dynamic power to their sound; they manage to surprise constantly with their collective intuition and seamless changes. Any label falls below the level their music achieves.

On record Rova just gets more interesting with each outing. On their first albums for Metalanguage – *Cinema Rovaté* (ML 101), *Daredevils* (ML 105), *The Removal Of Secrecy* (ML 106) – the group displays a solid understanding of their possibilities, given their diverse formations, rendering them with a fresh and sustained interchange of ideas and textures. Probably the most provocative of these dates is *Daredevils*, where Rova is matched with fellow Metalanguage founder, guitarist Henry Kaiser, whose musical researches have been nearly encyclopedic.

Though Rova's sound is already highly developed on their earlier albums, by *This, This, This* (Moers Music 01080) they seem to have taken a few steps further, foreshadowing their more commanding performances on *As Was* (ML 118) from 1981. The compositions get even more complex, the playing both more controlled and more adventurous: they know what they're about more in these albums, and few groups can touch Rova for richness of music.

With *Invisible Frames* (Fore Records) this deepening of the group's identity is reaffirmed, such that in their newest album, *Favorite Street* (Black Saint BSR 0076), a breathtaking tribute to the music of Steve Lacy, Rova manages to open endlessly Lacy's tunes further, as Lacy has done with Monk's music, while still sounding thoroughly Rova. An upcoming album of concert performances from their Russian tour, to be released on Enja or Hat Hut probably, promises not only their ambitious new piece, 'Terrains', but their first live album in the most exciting of circumstances.



Henry Kaiser

Rova Saxophone Quartet

Metalinguage itself has gone international as well. Founded in 1978 the company began by featuring improvising musicians from California mostly. Soon, though, it was releasing important albums by such new music pioneers as Evan Parker and Derek Bailey, from England, as well as Kaiser's own collaborations with Toshinori Kondo, Andrea Centazzo and Fred Frith. Now, over twenty albums later, Metalinguage has bloomed into the label 'for contemporary improvised musics, some structured, some free,' that Ochs envisioned along with Kaiser and the third co-founder, pianist Greg Goodman, with his joint venture The Beak Doctor.

Goodman is not so well known as he should be. His music is very fluid, very alive, jumping constantly, it hops, it happens. He seems to have been born with a smile, and a bit worried about that too. He likes the percussiveness of the piano, to toy with dense sounds and with delicate sounds, to roll things around inside over the strings. And he likes to wear masks, to make up stories about them, pull objects out of a sack and make them play also. His every performance is an event, an occasion for chance objects to come together and have their say; Goodman may be the Lewis Carroll of the piano.

Nearly all of Goodman's albums are recorded in concert, he prefers the feeling. From his first album, *A Similar Review* (ML 103/BD 1), to his next, improvised duets with Evan Parker, *Abracadabra* (ML 104/BD 2), less than three months have passed (in late 1978) but Goodman seems to have opened up his playing considerably. Though this may be conditioned partly by Parker's presence, Goodman also sounds much closer to his sources on the first record; as a duo they are a fine match of concentrated energies, compelling each other out of themselves, the result is marvellous.

Goodman's most recent record, *The Construction Of Ruins* (ML 113/BD 4), consists of pieces developed along his 1982 Australian tour, with Kaiser and Australian violinist Jon Rose assisting on most of the second side. Goodman's playing is fuller still on this date, as the solo tracks here particularly testify: 'Notes,' which closes the album, is a lovely and masterful tribute to Lennie Tristano with Goodman at his most mercurial.

For more than six years Goodman has also been the driving force behind Woody Woodman's Finger Palace. At the instructions of his extraterrestrial alter ego, he knocked down the living room wall of his Berkeley home to make room for a concert hall. Numerous albums have been recorded there, by Metalinguage artists as well as others such as saxophonist Henry Kuntz (former editor of *Bells*). The Finger Palace has been host to many visiting musicians too, though this spring it features the American premiere of Goodman's own solo performance art work, 'Dino-Opera-Saur' (the world premiere was held in Vienna last year), the latest of his ingenious hybrid pieces that blend theatrical elements into his concerts. He will probably be bringing the work to Europe later this year.

Then there is Henry Kaiser, a guitarist with an impressive ear. As he did on the more expansive 'Aloha' (ML 109), Kaiser offers a fair range of his musical pleasures on his latest release, *Who Needs Enemies?* (ML 123), with guitarist Fred Frith. The music here is more contained and in another direction than their completely electric collaboration of four years earlier, *With Friends Like These* (ML 107).

They are an exciting team and on the new record they both get down home, with a couple of beautiful Skip James blues tunes, and also into an area that borders on New Wave sometimes, yet is different still. That is, they take all the music that is their heritage and then some, but with new thinking, their own. Kaiser shows here as on all his records that there is a music that can assimilate the whole range of sources, from rock & roll to Hawaiian to Derek Bailey, and that it can fit in many places.

Three of the newest releases from Metalinguage show just how broad is the company's commitment. Perhaps the most spectacular is Diamanda Galas' long-awaited album (ML 119) consisting of two long pieces, 'Tragouthia Apo To Aima Fonos (Song Of The Blood Of Those Murdered)', dedicated to the victims of the Greek junta, and 'Panoptikon'. Galas is only using her voice - with a few mikes and usually a lot of studio

manipulation (though her voice is often most chilling when it is least tinkered with) - but her work is so powerful that casual listening is almost impossible.

She screams mostly, or chatters on hysterically, yet hearing her is to enter into the ancient origins of speech itself, she is incredible. While her first album, *Litanies Of Satan* (Y Records Y-18/Rough Trade), already seemed to be at the razor's edge of madness, the more sophisticated treatment of her newer pieces on Metalinguage would almost suggest that the healing is precisely there, at the edge, in an urgent catharsis.

The most beautiful music to come out of the company recently is Ali Akbar Khan's *Halfmoon* (ML 122). This Bengali master of the sarod offers here two magnificent ragas, one of which, 'Rag Malashri Gar', is very rarely heard as it is unique among some 75,000 ragas in that it only has three notes, rather than the normally minimal five. Khansahib develops both ragas so lovingly that you literally bathe an eternity in listening to them. This record marks an interest as well, on the part of Metalinguage, in producing improvisational music from other cultures too; hopefully, their projected album of new Chinese music for the ch'in will be out soon.

But Metalinguage is open to musical currents anywhere. The Trio Improvisazione from Genoa, Italy, had been sending the company tapes until they received one they especially liked, *Like A Breath* (ML 121). With the oddly appealing combination of viola, piano and oboe, the Trio Improvisazione creates a music that lets in the spaces, shaping them, curious. Other Metalinguage projects currently in the works include records by Holland's Maarten Alteena Quartet, the Canadian Music Collective, and possibly the English Improvising String Quartet.

'So it's smoking', as Ochs says, 'a lot of really good things.' And Metalinguage is finding that there is an audience, one that's growing and adventurous.

METALINGUAGE, 2639 Russell Street, Berkeley, CA 94705, USA.

Note: Besides the Rova records mentioned above, their only other record is *The Bay* with Andrea Centazzo (Itcus Records). The full catalogue of currently available Metalinguage is listed separately:

- ML 123
Who Needs Enemies?: Fred Frith and Henry Kaiser
- ML 122
Half Moon: Ustad Ali Akbar Khan
- ML 121
Like A Breath: Trio Improvisazione
- ML 119
Diamanda Galas
- ML 118
As Was: Rova Saxophone Quartet
- ML 117/BD 6
The Metalinguage Festival of Improvised Music, 1980. Volume 2: The Social Set
- ML 116/BD 5
The Metalinguage Festival of Improvised Music, 1980. Volume 1: The Social Set
- ML 114
A View From Six Windows: Derek Bailey & Christine Jeffery
- ML 113/BD 4
The Construction Of Ruins: Greg Goodman
- ML 111
Outside Pleasures: Henry Kaiser
- ML 110/BD 3
Evan Parker at The Finger Palace
- ML 109
Aloha: Henry Kaiser
- ML 107
With Friends Like These: Fred Frith and Henry Kaiser
- ML 105
Derelict: The Rova Saxophone Quartet with Henry Kaiser
- ML 104/BD 2
Abracadabra: Evan Parker & Greg Goodman
- ML 103/BD 1
A Similar Review: Greg Goodman
- ML 102
Protocol: Henry Kaiser
- ML 101
Cinema Rotati: The Rova Saxophone Quartet

TED CURSON

Brian Priestley talks to TED CURSON about the trumpeter's music, his famed association with Mingus and memories of Philadelphia in the late Fifties.

TED CURSON is a compelling trumpeter whose work is, in the best sense of the word, unclassifiable. Recently on tour with the Don Weller-Brian Spring Quartet – a group he first met at last year's Bracknell Festival – he was enjoying his first exposure to British audiences. Which is quite surprising, and rather disgraceful on our part, when you consider his presence on the European scene for much of the last twenty years.

Fortunately, his in-person performance is exciting enough to make you forget all about the fame-by-association which tends to precede him. A lot of impressive names appeared, however, in his own choice of representative recordings. Out of eighteen albums as a leader and 500(?) as a sideman, the ones he nominated were *Mingus Presents Mingus* (JazzMan JAZ5048), *Mingus At Antibes* (Atlantic SD2-3001), Cecil Taylor *In Transition* (Blue Note BN-LA548), Andrew Hill's *Spiral* (also featuring Lee Konitz, on Freedom FLP40156) and his own album *The Trio* with Ray Drummond and Roy Haynes (Interplay IF7722). He also enthused about a new big-band album produced and written by Teo Macero, *Impressions Of Charles Mingus* (Palo Alto Jazz PA8046), on which he is the featured trumpeter.

'Now I picked these records because these are all different. It's almost like another part of my personality on each one,' he explained. 'I'm into another groove completely with the Weller-Spring group. I'm playing straight down the tubes, bashing it out, and I need something like that on record... The way I feel in my heart, I haven't made my best record yet.'

Curson very nearly made his jazz debut on the Cecil Taylor album reissued as *Coltrane Time*, quoting Taylor's interview in the book *Jazz: Four Lives* (by A.B. Spellman) as evidence that the choice of trumpeter Kenny Dorham was dictated by the producer. Ted had taken part in an all-night jam session with Taylor at Hartnett's Studio on 42nd Street, as a result of which Curson's phone number was duly noted by the pianist. At the age of 23, Ted was a veteran of 'classical' studies, bebop lessons with Jimmy Heath, gigging in New York with Charlie Ventura, r & b record dates and Monday-night-jam-sessions at Birdland but, asked whether he felt prepared for work with Taylor, he replied: 'Absolutely not! ... Going with Cecil Taylor was really quite an experience. And till this day he never forgave me for going with Mingus but the whole year I worked for Cecil, we made one record and one concert. And we rehearsed every day... Mingus was one of the few artists I ever met in my life who could work a club more than a year, six nights a week. That was one of his charms because he could keep you working – if you could stay in the band! A lot of guys couldn't stay past one set. Some didn't even make a set!'

'Charlie Mingus was like a show in himself, you never knew what was going to happen. As a matter of fact, I used to always play with one eye on the music and one eye on him... After I had been in the band, like, three months, I wouldn't say I was disenchanted but – one of my friends from Detroit, a very fine piano player, called me up and said, "Guess what? I finally made the big-time, I'm coming in the band tonight!" ... He played one chord. Mingus stopped the band: "Get out, you're

fired!" And it was really bad because that night the club was full of black people, which was kinda rare, and all the people left. Well, it turned out that those people were his relatives that flew in from Detroit. The club-owner went crazy, he told Mingus, so Mingus said "If I had have known it, I would have kept him."

'But the point is, you were only as good as your last solo, and each solo was like a challenge, or another bid to stay in the band... I think the main thing I learned from Mingus, if anything, is to keep practising your craft and keep working on that just because you play one good solo – if you're going under the umbrella of a creative artist, you should really try to be that and try to really play something every time you pick up your instrument. And that's not so easy to do.'

Speaking of this period in another interview recently, Sy Johnson said about Curson: 'Actually, Ted wasn't that good a player then. But he was young and cocky, and Mingus liked that.'

Anyway, he managed to survive and grow in this demanding atmosphere for nearly a year, before leaving at his own request to do work under his own name and albums with Cecil Taylor again (*Into The Hot*) and Archie Shepp (*The New York Contemporary Five* session on Savoy).

Such preparation as Curson may have had for this kind of work probably stemmed from the obscure pianist Hasaan Ibn Ali who made only one hard-to-find record called *The Max Roach Trio Featuring The Legendary Hasaan*. I wasn't aware of Ted's association with Hasaan whose reputation is beneath-the-underground and whose only long spell away from his native Philadelphia was with the Joe Morris r & b band in which he replaced the almost-as-obscure Elmo Hope probably in the Fifties.

'He had this other name called Count Langford but we're very close because we have the same name and religion. He used to play with me all the time and he was a very, er – very odd sort of a guy. For instance, he would buy a brand new tie and cut it off below the knot. And he played very strange chords, in a way much stranger than Cecil Taylor. One night we were playing "Yesterdays" – the old "Yesterdays" not the Beatles' one – and Hasaan played something funny. I turned round and said, "What chord was that?"; and he said, "Well, it's a B-29." So I said, "A B-29 is an airplane!"; and he said "That's right, it's an airplane chord."

'I can almost tell you as many stories about him as Mingus because one time I had a job at the Bellevue-Stratford which is a very strict, very straight Anglo-Saxon hotel in Philadelphia. Very few blacks get a chance to work there, and I told him you must have a tuxedo, white shirt and bow-tie. So he came with an Easter basket on his head, and what looked like seaweed hanging out of his lapel down to his shoe! But, on the piano, he was dynamic and completely original. He had the technique of a Bud Powell, the sensitivity of a Thelonious Monk – the only guys I know who were similar in a way were maybe Elmo or Herbie Nichols... But the part about his originality is that he was like a "mainstream modern" player. He wasn't an angular player like a Monk – Monk liked to play a lot on one and three –

he was more like a two and four guy, it's just the things that he played were different.'

Curson's summing-up of the Philadelphia scene during his youth was that: 'A lot of people on the way to New York, or sort of being shoved out of New York for a moment, landed in Philadelphia. That's why we had so many great artists there. Not because there were jobs, there were no jobs.' Just three days younger than drummer Tootie Heath, Ted met his elder brothers Jimmy and Percy, who was 'just starting this group we called the undertakers at the time - because they had the black suits, the socks alike, everything alike - which turned out to be the fabulous Modern Jazz Quartet'.

According to Curson, John Coltrane was another with cause to bemoan the lack of activity in Philadelphia. 'I always admired his playing and he used to write out little things for me you know, the blues change and stuff. But he never had a job and one New Year's Eve - New Year's Eve, people work when they never worked the whole year - well, he had no job. So I took him on my job and he played "Nancy With The Laughing Face", I'll never forget that. I never heard anything so great, so intense, with so much feeling.

'As a matter of fact there's two people he asked to make records with him, all the time. That was [saxist] Bill Barron and myself 'cos he and Bill Barron were always together. And we said no... My own feeling was that I couldn't take advantage of this man and I don't feel I had anything to say. Now, I'm sorry that I didn't. I'm very sorry, whether I had anything to say or not.'

One invitation to record that Curson did accept in his early days in New York resulted in him playing behind singer Lloyd Price on both 'Stagger Lee' and 'Personality'. This came about simply because he was in the right place, standing with his trumpet case in front of the Hotel Theresa on Harlem's 125th Street, at the right time. 'Some guys came over and said, "You play trumpet?" I said, "Yes"... "Well, you got a record date right now!" I mean, they never saw me, they didn't know if I could play or not. And those records sold in the millions and now they're "golden oldies".'

'When we finished making the record, Lloyd's manager said, "What do you want, a royalty or straight money?" From Philadelphia, they always told you to get the money. So the money was 66 dollars!... The truth of the matter is that jazz records usually outsell rock records, because of the long period of time, but it just seems as though nobody thinks about that [royalties]. For instance, you can get a Clifford Brown-Max Roach record now that's more than twenty years old. Or *Mingus Presents Mingus*, something I did in the Sixties. They're still selling.'

Although he didn't emphasise the point, it's undoubtedly this lack of financial recognition in the US for jazz and its performers that caused Ted Curson to spend so much time in Europe. Even the success of his critically acclaimed US-based septet in the late Seventies is laughed off as being 'A success for two years, and it cost me two houses! The point is that everybody paid me, but not quite enough. So I'd end up selling some houses to sort of build up the band.' Whereas over here he has led the life of a freelance and found it so compatible that 'Europe for me is like coming home, because I can do everything I want to do'.

Some of the opportunities which would probably not come his way in the States include involvement in the running of a major festival (Porl in Finland) and recording background music for the Pasolini film *Theorem* (although even that required a lengthy law suit to collect adequate payment!) Last year he saw himself on screen in a Finnish feature film called *A Day In The Life Of A Jazz Musician*, contributing some music but doing more acting than playing. Between times, one thing Ted can be sure of is a lot of travelling.

'It's nice if you travel with the musicians and the music is all prepared, and then you can do a lot of things. But usually - the kind of schedules I have - you really don't get chance for rehearsal. Somebody drives me from the airplane right to the stage and then I meet the guys then and there. We talk about some songs, or I just start up playing - it depends if I know them or not. They don't know what kind of music I'm coming with... avant-garde, mainstream/modern, or neo-bop which the whole world is into now, more or less. I don't want to play by rote, to have these certain things I'm going to play this certain way. I want to react to the band, to the audience, to the situation, to the atmosphere inside and outside. That way, I think I give the best of myself. And, since I'm a Gemini and there's two of us, we have more to work from!'

Like fellow Gemini Miles Davis, Ted has proved remarkably adaptable and capable of exploiting his adaptability. Suddenly, since last autumn, he's found himself working full-time in New York again. 'Now I have a ten-year contract to do these jam-sessions. They haven't had jam-sessions for many years in America because of the unions and now we're allowed to have them. And this is very good, because practising at home is nice but it's shadow-boxing. The real work is done on stage.'

This revitalising activity - revitalising for the New York scene and for Ted Curson - takes place six nights a week at the Blue Note, at Avenue of the Americas and 3rd Street.

'And the funny part about this club, if you walk across the roof you will come right into the club I used to work with Mingus in the Sixties, and that's the Showplace.'



COUNT BASIE was one of the few jazzmen to achieve universal popularity without compromising his music. He led jazz's most important big band after Duke Ellington's and, apart from a brief period in the early Fifties, had kept it together continuously since 1936.

British audiences, however, had to wait until 1957 to enjoy its massive swing in person, principally because of a Musicians Union bar on foreign bands. On this and subsequent tours – there must have been at least a dozen – legend reports that Basie became very fond of fish and chips, putting them on a par with his other favourite dish, Kansas City spare ribs!

It was in Kansas City that his career took off in the mid-Thirties.

William Basie had been born in Red Bank, New Jersey, on 21 August 1904, developing his piano skills in New York with encouragement and help from Fats Waller. He then spent several years touring as an accompanist to variety acts, among them such oddly named attractions as Kate Crippen and Her Kids and The Hippity Hop Show. In 1927 he found himself stranded in Kansas City by the collapse of a vaudeville show. He settled there and found his talents receiving more appropriate recognition.

He worked with Walter Page's Blue Devils and with Bennie Moten's Band. After Moten's death in 1935 he formed his own outfit, several other Moten sidemen joining him. New York entrepreneur John Hammond heard a Basie broadcast from Kansas City and initiated the band's first national tour in 1936. At first the musicians struggled, but eventually captured the public's imagination two years later during a residency at New York's Savoy Ballroom. After that they never looked back.

Basie's approach to music was so appealing that after more than forty years its basic elements still sounded fresh. The only changes in what was probably the longest career of any bandleader, with the notable exception of Duke Ellington, were a gradual refinement and a growing conservatism, caused partly by Basie's inherent caution and partly by his apparent inability in later years to obtain soloists of the quality of the Thirties when he led what was virtually an all-star band. His illustrious sidemen included trumpeter Buck Clayton, trombonist Dickie Wells and tenor saxist Lester Young, one of the most important innovators in the history of jazz.

But while all the members of the band contributed to its success, Basie was undoubtedly the driving force, a fact that was often overlooked because of his modest, almost self-deprecating personality.

As a pianist he was as sparse and laconic as his early arrangements. He often used the piano for punctuation, filling in and elaborating on the lines played by the band. Nevertheless, with-

COUNT BASIE

1904-1984



BILLY O'CONNOR

out him it could never have sounded the same.

Throughout his career, the man himself remained an enigma, a puzzle even to those who worked for him for years.

He was known to be deeply concerned with the racial problem, but his only public comment was a rather lukewarm endorsement of the late Dr Martin Luther King.

He was extremely careful about money and it became almost a matter of course for his musicians to take him to the union before he would agree to increase

salaries. But his concern with money was understandable. Like many black musicians of his era, he was shamelessly exploited during his early days by the white power structure.

John Hammond has described how Basie's first contract with Decca in 1936 called for twenty-four records for a total payment of \$750. Hammond later complained to the union and the initial payment was raised to scale but – despite the fact that the records are still selling – Basie never received a cent in royalties.

Kenneth Klee

SOUND CHECK

GERI ALLEN

The Printmakers (Minor Music 001).

Recorded: Stuttgart – 8 & 9 February 1984.
Side One: 'A Celebration Of All Life'; 'Eric'; 'Running As Fast As You Can... TGT'; 'M's Heart'. Side Two: 'Printmakers'; 'Andrew'; 'When Kabuya Dances'; 'D & V'.
Geri Allen (p); Anthony Cox (b); Andrew Cyrille (d); mouth perc; tympan.

The name Geri Allen probably means little to UK jazz enthusiasts. Fortunately, this sad state of affairs could change dramatically this month with the coming of the Actual 84 Festival. Then – Londoners, at least – will be able to hear American pianist Geri Allen in performance.

Geri Allen's keyboard contributions in such elevated and established company as Lester Bowie, Roscoe Mitchell, James Newton and Oliver Lake have been highly acclaimed, particularly in Europe. This – her debut album, with guest drummer Andrew Cyrille and Anthony Cox, a truly inspired bassist – introduces us to Geri Allen's own compositions.

Each piece is a strong, personal statement – from the evocative, sparky tension of 'Eric' (for Dolphy) through her vibrant rhythmic explorations of 'When Kabuya Dances' and the spirited trio inter-play of the dynamic opening track 'A Celebration Of All Life' to the moody, almost introspective 'Andrew' (for Cyrille).

The *Printmakers* reveals Geri Allen as a remarkably individual and original new talent. Her improvisational excursions (all too short here) could prove all the more intriguing in live performance, given more space, especially on her particularly lyrical ballads. And the performance – if this album is anything to go by – promises to be an exciting musical experience. Go for it.

Chrissie Murray

ART ENSEMBLE OF CHICAGO

Among The People (Praxis Records CM 103)

Recorded: Live in Italy – August 1980.
Side One: 'Among The People'. Side Two: 'Shango King'; 'Choosing A Cracker'.

Lester Bowie (t, perc); Joseph Jarman (saxes, bs, dt, f, vbs, perc); Roscoe Mitchell, (saxes, f, dt, perc); Malachi Favors Magoustos (b, melodic, perc); Famoudou Don Moye (d, perc).

In recent years, the Art Ensemble Of Chicago has tended to resemble one of those saurian rock super-groups: umpteen-directions-at-once eclecticism, creative-clash-of-strong-personalities always on the fring of anarchy. From 1980, *Among The People* shows them

at that point where the centrifugal force is still in check and where the internal tensions of style and philosophy are still subordinated to an overall musical direction. The long title-track, held together by Malachi Favors' incisive and uncomplicated bass, is a perfect instance of the AEC's style (both of attack and content) with Bowie's trumpet cutting sharply across the line set by Jarman's bass clarinet.

'Among The People' dissolves into a slow jungle meditation, full of cries and half-heard sounds, that sets the pace for 'Shango King' and the longer 'Choosing A Cracker', the obligatory knockabout curtain downer. Vigorous but contained, *Among The People* presents the Art Ensemble at their very best.

Brian Morton

ART BLAKEY & THE JAZZ MESSENGERS

Buhaina – The Continuing Message (Affinity AFF 113)

Recorded: New York – 9 & 11 October 1957.

Side One: 'For Minors Only'; 'Right Down Front'; 'Deo-X'; 'Sweet Sakeena'. Side Two: 'For Miles And Miles'; 'Krafty'; 'Late Spring'.

Bill Hardman (t); Johnny Griffin (ts); Sam Dockery ('Deo-X' only) or Junior Mance (p); James DeBrest (b), Art Blakey (d).

This is another worthwhile re-issue, recorded years before Blakey adopted 'Buhaina' as his Muslim nom de guerre. It was originally recorded on the Bethlehem label (Parlophone in Britain) under the title *Hard Drive*.

In fact, this is one of Arturo's gentler efforts, catching the Messengers in unusually laid-back mood. Griffin, who had not long hit New York from his native Chicago, was in his usual irrepressible form, though. 'For Minors Only' is kept very low, but Griffin shows that an exciting solo can be created at minimal volume.

With Junior Mance on piano, the session inevitably takes on a bluesy cast, and 'Right Down Front' is so basic that it comes perilously close to downright corn. Hardman, who has been in and out of Blakey's bands several times, is a dependable player with a bright sound and a perky, staccato style.

All the solos are kept short, but the meat is there, both in the writing and the playing, and each piece has an enjoyable feel to it. Griffin's solos, in particular, are miniature classics, full of richly melodic phrases and his characteristic surging attack.

His flight on 'Sweet Sakeena' is an especially good example of brilliant instant composition. Jon Hendricks should write lyrics to it; the line is so well defined that it can be memorised at a couple of hearings.

Jack Massarik



MAX ROACH & CECIL TAYLOR

Historic Concerts

(Soul Note SN 1100/1)

Recorded: New York – 15 December 1979.

Side One: 'Duets Part I'. Side Two: 'Duets Part II'. Side Three: 'Duets Part III'. Side Four: 'Duets Part IV'.

Cecil Taylor (p); Max Roach (d).

Roach has duetted with the avant-garde before – Braxton, and ex-spokesman Shepp – but his meeting with its grandmaster provides a confrontation that the music superbly resolves. Taylor's drummers have seldom taken up the gauntlet of dialogue, preferring to sketch impressions of metre around the orchestra of the keyboard, but the astonishing quality of 'Duets' resides in Roach's refusal to shirk the challenges which the pianist lays down. Taylor sets off at his usual hurricane tempo, the reeling arpeggios lashed forward, and the drummer ripostes with a furiously paced amalgam of his almost classical techniques: suddenly the emotional and spiritual ties between the musicians are made palpable. It's like an embodiment of the tradition marching forward.

There's no space to detail all that happens over the ensuing eighty minutes. Broadly, it vindicates Taylor's insistence that he has remained at the core of an Afro-American art: his ceaseless elongation and transfiguring of (ahem) 'free jazz' methods into a deeper, wilder, more closely argued pianism is backlit by the different resources Roach conjures from the trap kit. All is pell-mell activity for the first two sides; then Taylor shifts to a dancing stealth, answered by percussive

cracks that cymbals eventually cloud over; a chasm of violence beckons before a ballad passage that makes one wish Cecil would cool out more often. The finale looks back to the initial velocity.

Roach puts it best himself: 'We co-existed'. These are two consummate soloists who happened to let their thinking reflect on each other without offering specific support – a duet without crutches. Record of the year.

Richard Cook

When Max Roach walked out on stage for his long overdue concert with Cecil Taylor back in December 1979, he was pleased with the audience he saw waiting. It was a big audience. It had the musicians he expected, but many he did not. It was a political audience. Fellow travellers in his long struggle for Black civil rights and more.

Another mile on the road from LPs *We Insist* and *Percussion Bitter Sweet* was about to be laid, another contribution like his music with Parker and others in the Forties about to be made.

Columbia University, where the concerts took place, is in Harlem, New York's most famous black district, and home of the bebop style of jazz which Roach helped to pioneer. Columbia was one of the famous radical universities during the student rebellions of the Sixties.

At the Columbia concerts, Roach said six months later, 'it was a different audience that came. It was full of radicals and civil rights type people. Even the radical judges who are refusing to charge bail in New York – they were there. Political people can now pack our concerts.' As for the jazz crowd, 'I noticed lots of avant-garde musicians, but a few of the mainstream as well'.

Before going out to face this audience and receiving – by the accounts printed on the LP sleeve – an ecstatic reception, how did the musicians prepare?

'As this music is improvised, do you know how Cecil and I rehearse? We talk about music, we talk about society and politics. We are swimming upstream, we know, but this is what we have elected, to do. But to play with Cecil is truly rewarding both artistically and socio-politically.'

Roach had always wanted to play with Taylor. But first, he set himself the goal of performing a number of duos, first with Archie Shepp (already on record, thanks to hat Hut) and then, 'with Dollar Brand – Abdullah Ibrahim. I figured that as we came from the same kind of oppressive and racist society we could come together and play without even rehearsing. And it worked this way.'

After this, he played with Anthony Braxton, of whom, like Taylor, Roach says 'musicians like him are thumbing their noses at becoming millionaires. What they are doing is like what we did back in the Forties, creating music instead of just trying to create money.' Then, when he was ready to play with Taylor, a student group at Columbia University organised the concert.

Along with his other duo partners, Roach declares, 'Cecil and I have a special kinship, we are alike in many ways. We make a political statement with our music. We share a desire to make music.'

Now, four years later, the result is out on record. And what a record!

Skip Laszlo

ANTHONY BRAXTON & DEREK BAILEY Royal Volume One (Incus 43)

Recorded: Luton – 2 July 1974.

Side One: 'Opening (opening)'. Side Two: 'Opening (closing)'.

Derek Bailey (g); Anthony Braxton (ss, as, b-flat dt, contrabass dt).

The partnership of Bailey and Braxton, although increasingly intermittent, was one which stretched through a number of encounters within and without Company. These particular recordings date back to 1974; a live concert from the same period as the duo's *Emanem* release. And although – not surprisingly – some of the underlying precepts remain consistent, *Royal Volume One* emphasises different aspects of the relationship (with *Volume Two* due to follow).

At this stage in his career, Bailey's electric guitar work rang with its greatest asstringent clarity, rising and swelling within fairly strict dynamic parameters (only occasionally incorporating distortion), and had about it a certain bubbling, diamond precision.

Meanwhile Braxton acquires himself masterfully over a whole range of reeds, building his improvisations with characteristic architectural care. When not matching Bailey with the effervescent quicksilver buoyancy of his saxophone play, Braxton provides the gruff and dirty textures against which the guitar is set in stark relief. At times they skirt and accommodate each other, more often they work through the same (or similar) concerns together.

As Braxton became more and more interested in channeling all his energies into increasingly complex orchestrations, and his appetite for free improvisation diminished, so did his work with Bailey. These recordings are some of the first fruits of a rich encounter (whose development is further documented amongst the Company releases). They not only demonstrate what a fine free improviser Braxton was (even when set against a master of the genre) but are engaging and exciting in themselves, no mere historical documents.

Kenneth Ansell

PETER BROTZMANN/ALBERT MANGELSDORFF/GUNTER SOMMER Pica Pica (FMP 1050)

Recorded: 'Jazzfest Unna', Stradthal – 18 September 1982.

Side One: 'Instant Tears'. Side Two: 'Wie Du Mir, So Ich Dir Noch Lange Nicht'; 'Pica, Pica'.

Peter Brotzmann (reeds, tarogato); Albert Mangelsdorff (tbn); Gunter Sommer (d, horn).

Pica Pica was very nearly FMP's last production. After more than a decade as the most prolific and increasingly broadly-based label catering for free improvisation it seemed as if Free Music Production would grind to a halt. However, events have taken a more positive turn with *Piane* – for a long time FMP's German distributor – not only taking over the stock but also planning fresh releases, with a batch due in the autumn. Whether the character of the label will be preserved in practice remains to be seen, but with Jost Gebers and Dieter Hahne participating in the preparation of the new releases it is to be hoped that it will.

Which brings us to *Pica Pica* itself: a fitting album with which to close what should only be the first chapter of the FMP saga.

Mangelsdorff and Brotzmann are longstanding musical associates – they appeared together on three of the first five FMP releases – and here they are joined by Gunter Sommer, the East German drummer whose individual and highly melodic drum style has been brought to the attention of listeners internationally largely through his FMP recordings.

On the evidence of this album it is a highly productive trio, characterised by its warmth and heart. They chart a course between invention, control and surprise which, when heard in comparison with those first FMP releases, clearly demonstrates how far both the music and the Brotzmann/Mangelsdorff partnership have come. Over the years those first violent eruptions have matured with a growing sense of coherent discipline.

Now, in 'Instant Tears', Brotzmann relaxes with confident authority as he slowly uncorks an evocative baritone line over Mangelsdorff's trembling trombone and Sommer's rising, swelling and falling percussion. But it is not a soloist's music: each musician nudges and contributes, each helping to shape the course and direction.

In 'Wie Du Mir...', to give just one example, Sommer and Mangelsdorff are to be found with the former developing strong pattering rhythm figures while the latter skips lightly through them with elliptical melodic explorations. When Brotzmann enters he rises to a thin, high piercing reed overtone which, with just the gentlest of insistence, doubles the musical pressure, guiding the trio towards more turbulent territory.

FMP has been important not simply because the sheer volume of material they have managed to release on record has been such that an (almost) comprehensive documentary overview of the music has emerged, but also because it has enabled rich musical moments, such as these, to be disseminated and enjoyed time and time again. May that continue to be the case.

Kenneth Ansell

THE BUGGER ALL STARS The Bugger All Stars (Bead 19)

Recorded: Coventry and London – 27 February, 28 May 1981

Side One: 'Live'. Side Two: 'Studio'.

Mike Hames (as, bs dt); Jim LeBaigue (d); Hugh Metcalfe (g, bs d, high hat); Phil Wachsmann (vln, electronics, elastic, decoys).

THE BUGGER ALL STARS Bonzo Bites Back (Bead 21)

Recorded: Brixton and Portsmouth – 20, 24 January 1983

Side One: 'Dog'. Side Two: 'Gasmask'.

Mike Hames (as, bs dt); Jim LeBaigue (d); Hugh Metcalfe (g, oscillator, gas mask); Phil Wachsmann (vln, electronics, harmonica, decoys, horn, dog whistle).

Superficially, the musical distance between Phil Wachsmann and Hugh Metcalfe would seem impossible to span. In the live environment (where three of these four sides were recorded) Wachsmann has always

**COE, OXLEY & CO.
Natty (On) Willisau (hat ART 2004)**

Recorded: Jazz Festival Willisau – 2B August 1983.

Side One: 'Some Other Autumn'. *Side Two:* 'Natty'; 'A Time There Was'. *Side Three:* 'Bub Or Run'; 'Body and Soul'. *Side Four:* 'Re: Person I Knew'; 'Gabrielissima'.

Tony Coe (clt, ss, ts); Tony Oxley (d); Chris Laurence (b).

Tony Coe is a virtuoso in so many jazz contexts, yet Natty (On) Willisau highlights a facet of his talent that's been underplayed on recent records – that of the full-flight improviser.

This set (recorded with hat Hut's usual loving care) transfixes from start to finish; through a witty dissection of Monk's 'Natty', Coe's own giddy lyrical 'Gabrielissima' and a ruminative 'Body and Soul' that's light years beyond your typical tenor's half-baked Bean toast.

The LP's low-key moments are equally good, like the tribute to Robert Crandford with 'A Time There Was' and a lovely, relaxed 'Re: Person I Knew'. Coe, poised and poignant. Then, his playing is inspired throughout the record's eighty minutes: supple, daring attack wedded to disciplined technique and unfaltering richness of tone. An exemplary exegesis of modern reeds play.

This isn't just Coe's record. Oxley and Laurence exude skill and empathy of the highest calibre, and are never outshone by the leader's light. Oxley excels on cymbals and the quieter stickwork, laying down a complex rhythmic network behind the other two, while Laurence's solos – on 'Natty', for example – really capture the spirit.

British jazz may have an unglamorous image but Natty (On) Willisau is a bravura display by three men who stand with the world's best. Yeah, that good. **Graham Lock**

**RICHIE COLE
Alto Annie's Theme (Palo Alto PA 8036)**

Recorded: San Francisco – 31 July 1982.

Side One: 'Jeannine'; 'Key Largo'; 'Boplicity'; 'Sophisticated Lady'; 'Call Of The Wild'. *Side Two:* 'Song For Aaron Copland'; 'Alto Annie's Theme'; 'Tangerine'; 'Sheaf Of Wheat'; 'Easy To Love'.

Richie Cole (as, ts, bs); Dick Hindman (p); Brian Bromberg (b); Victor Jones (d); Babatundé (perc); Bruce Forman (g).

Richie Cole And . . . (Palo Alto PA 8023)

Recorded: San Francisco – 16 February 1982.

Side One: 'Return To Alto Acres'; 'Things We Did Last Summer'; 'Art's Opus'. *Side Two:* 'A & R'; 'Palo Alto Blues'; 'Broadway'.

Richie Cole (as, ts, bs); Art Pepper (as, dt); Roger Kellaway (p); Bob Magnusson (b); Billy Higgins (d).

Richie Cole's style was formed by early study with Phil Woods, and he militantly proclaims his continued allegiance to what he conceives to be the main bebop tradition. But while few jazz musicians would deny the centrality of bop (viz John Stevens's statement that 'Bebop is a discipline'), they may not be attracted by Coles's revivalist fervour.

In an interview published in *Jazz Times* (October 1980), Cole told Herb Wong, now executive of the Palo Alto label, that

SKELETON CREW

Learn To Talk (Rift/Rec Rec 08/05)

Recorded: Switzerland – December 1983–January 1984.

Side One: 'Que Viva'; 'Onwards And Upwards'; 'The Way Things Fall (Back Apart)'; 'Not My Shoes'; 'The Washington Post'; 'We're Still Free'; 'Victoryville'. *Side Two:* 'Los Colitos'; 'Life At The Top'; 'Learn To Talk'; 'Factory Song'; 'It's Fine'; 'Zach's Flag'.

Tom Cora (cello, bass guitar, cello, d, home-made drums and contraptions, vcis); Fred Frith (g, six-string bass, vln, casio, home-made bass, p, d, vcis).

FRED FRITH

Cheap At Half The Price (Ralph Records FF8356)

Recorded: at Frith's home over a period of time.

Side One: 'Some Clouds Don't'; 'Cap The Knife'; 'Evolution'; 'Too Much, Too Little'; 'The Welcome'; 'Same Old Me'; 'Some Clouds Do'. *Side Two:* 'Instant Party'; 'Walking Song'; 'Flying In The Face Of Facts'; 'Heart Bares'; 'Absent Friends'; 'The Great Healer'.

Fred Frith (g, six-string bass, Casio-101, vln, xyl, vd, home-mades); Frank Wuyts, Fred Maher, Paul Sears, Hans Bruniusson (generic drum examples manipulated by Frith); Bill Laswell (b, 'Same Old Me' only); Tina Curran (b, 'Too Much, Too Little' only); Aksak Maboul (clapping, 'Absent Friends' only).

FRED FRITH

Live In Japan (Recommended Records Japan RRJ 003/004)

Recorded: Osaka, Fukuoka, Maebashi, Tokyo – July 1981.

Side One: 'Osaka I'. *Side Two:* 'Osaka II'; 'Osaka III'; 'Fukuoka I'. *Side Three:* 'Fukuoka II'; 'Maebashi I'. *Side Four:* 'Fukuoka II'; 'Tokyo I'.

Fred Frith (Burns Black Bison guitar); Charles Fletcher (custom double-neck guitar, violin, vln pilot's throat microphone).

These three releases present Frith in three different environments, each with its own modus operandi, spread over two and a half years and several thousand miles.

Cheap At Half The Price is Frith's most concerted effort to date to make a pop record, but in a sense he fails twice in the attempt. His musical intelligence is too strong to allow him to write banal pop ditties but – at the same time – he lacks the simple and effective melodic flair of the inspired pop composer. Yet in attempting to adopt that role he consciously irons out the more errant, exploratory sides of his musical persona.

Thus, on the one hand, he remains too quirky and individualistic for the pop market while, on the other, undermining the sense of musical adventure which appeals everywhere. Interest in this record centres on the unresolved tension that this engenders. But try 'Heart Bares' or 'The Great Healer' (significantly, tracks without vocals) and this record may still claim a piece of your heart in spite of itself.

At the other extreme, *Live In Japan* finds Frith exploring the 'guitar-on-the-belly' approach to free improvisation during a two-week tour of Japan. This

impressed with his careful agility and an inquisitiveness which he directs towards stretching and twisting the music unpredictably, but always with control.

On the other hand, Metcalfe has often seemed bent on a helter-skelter slide run in which he abdicated control; consequently he has frequently alienated listeners and locked into a cycle where his primary concern has seemed to be to shock (a quality which has gone some way towards securing him a place in several of Tony Oxley's groups), often to the detriment of the music as a whole. Yet there has been no denying the passion and energy which he brings to his performances.

In the Bugger All Stars the distance between these two points has been bridged in no small part by the sure, pivotal drum work of LeBaigue and Hames' deftly managed reed work. They spin and push the music from delicate filligree to the swaggering dance. And with the censorial element inevitably to be found in the selection of material for record release, the tendency to affront has been supplanted by a closely focussed representation of the musical concerns at work.

The All Stars' eponymous first album has been with us for some time. We have had time to become accustomed to its broad movements from an overall pitter-patterting continuum intimacy to bold gypsy-dance figures, from predominantly fluttering detail (some beautiful sax-violin interplay with percussion punctuation and brittle, stinging guitar) to more overt rhythmic action.

The release of *Bonzo Bites Back* (recorded last year) throws up some interesting comparisons. There is no hint of temerity in the music here: the listener is immediately struck by the fresh 'openness' of Wachsmann's soaring violin lines (at times almost classical in character) and the attractive 'echoey' pizzicato rhythms he dovetails with cymbal swells and over which rugged saxophone and Metcalfe's electronics fire off each other.

But this is just the tip of the iceberg. *Bonzo* builds on the expansive, more emotionally overt, aspects of the first album without sacrificing its surety of detail. In many ways this movement reflects broader developments within a particular strand of improvised music.

During the Seventies improvised music took a step back from the open linguistic and emotional bravura of its earliest phase and developed a thin-wire concentration and intimate compression of dynamic and emotional range (a move which can be traced back to SME). Recent years have seen the music pass through this particular vortex and now begin to cast its net wider once more (a manoeuvre which Alterations were instrumental in shaping).

This is not to say that the music is now repeating and refashioning its early forthright stance, rather that a further stage of maturation has been and is being accomplished. It is tangible within the thrust of these two records.

But even within this context, Metcalfe's screaming from behind a gas mask (as side two of *Bonzo* does) will chill those affronted by it in concert.

Kenneth Ansell

two-record set documents a very specific point in Frith's career, where his use of the guitar laid flat on its back for concerts of improvised music had been developed to perhaps its most highly evolved level. The tour followed three-and-a-half years research into this approach, and it was not long after that in such playing situations he completely dispensed with the guitar in favour of home-made 'table-top' instruments.

For the most part the sound source here is still readily identifiable as guitar (Frith also adds occasional vocal and violin work) and the vocabulary is an extension of that to be found on the *Guitar Songs* albums. That is to say, it frequently employs a multiplicity of line (what Frith refers to as an 'orchestral' approach to the instrument) while some of the bow work, particularly, embraces the flattened, deadened sounds Frith was to investigate with his 'table-top' instruments.

The two approaches appear, for example, in the opening and closing sections of 'Osaka I' respectively. There is a fresh accessibility about Frith's improvisations here; he develops ideas over long parabolas at a measured pace. The movement is fashioned from a weight of detail in which tiny shards are set against raw, unfinished noise, intentional grotesquerie or deep, suspended sounds. Each idea is given space to flourish and breathe before it is reworked, supplanted or truncated.

Somewhere between these two projects squats *Skeleton Crew* – a partnership of Fred Frith and Tom Cora – although it also draws on the murkier textural areas Frith fashioned with Bob Ostertag. And it is in *Skeleton Crew* that these elements are most tellingly wed. Live appearances are fraught affairs, charged with a sort of desperation as the two musicians strain to channel all the different elements they employ into their performance. This gives their set an edge-of-the-seat tension, emphasised by the excitement of seeing two men produce a complexity of musical fibre comparable with a four or five piece group. With a record this is not the case, it is easy to forget that all this activity emanates from just two people... and there's always the faintest of overdubbing anyway.

Yet on *Learn To Talk*, Frith and Cora have managed to retain much of the raw energy of their concert work. The songs have a razor-sharp edge to them which was not to be found on *Cheap At Half The Price*, and are sung with an intensity of conviction that allows no quarter (nor room for the sort of doubts which leapt to mind with some of Frith's singing on *Cheap*...). The musical counterpart to this supports, links and bridges these outbursts with inflammatory power. The momentum achieved is such that the two sides of the record tumble together, mosaic-like, to make a total statement which amounts to more than the sum of the individual tracks.

Although Frith continues to work in several different musical areas, more and more of his energy and time is being devoted to *Skeleton Crew*. In *Skeleton Crew* the diverse elements at work in *Cheap At Half The Price* and *Live in Japan* collide and are hammered into shape alongside Cora's input. The results are a potent, volatile set, which very nearly captures the duo's live intensity.

Kenneth Ansell

▲ 'It takes more knowledge, training and imagination to play bebop than all the shit that's going on – the very "outside" stuff and a little funk... There are actually people who are afraid that it'll catch on again. It would put an end to them in six months!'

Such an old jibe is unworthy of Cole's ability, but it is indicative of much of his music. While he claims to be able to play what he calls 'crazy' as well as the next man, his efforts to do so on *Alto Anne's Theme* are few and far between.

For Richie Cole, bebop and what has developed from it remain distinct categories. His playing bears none of the marks of Coltrane, Dolphy or Coleman, all of whom were in the bebop lineage. Cole has great instrumental facility and a sensuous alto tone, but given his tendency to pastiche and to playing safe, his 'bebop' veers at times towards a fast swing which can be dangerously like the self-satisfaction of mainstream.

None of which can be said about Art Pepper, hardly an avant-gardist, but with sufficient individuality to assimilate new developments and still remain unmistakably himself. On *Richie Cole And...*, Pepper's is very much the sideman's role, more's the pity, but his presence and an elegant rhythm section make this much the more attractive of the two albums.

Jeremy Crump

MILES DAVIS Decoy (CBS 25951)

Recorded: New York – August 1983 to February 1984; live at Festival International de Jazz de Montreal – 7 July 1983.

Side One: 'Decoy', 'Robot 415', 'Code M.D.', 'Freaky Deaky'. Side Two: 'What It Is', 'That's Right', 'That's What Happened'.

Miles Davis (t, synth); Robert Irving III (synth, synth b, el drum programming); John Scofield (g); Branford Marsalis (ss); Bill Evans (as); Darryl Jones (el b); Al Foster (d); Mino Cinelu (perc).

Hailed by some as Miles's best album for twenty years, *Decoy* is a record for the Eighties. The two sides are awash with synthesizers, mostly thanks to knew keyboard star Robert Irving III who co-produced the set with the leader, although Davis is credited with synthesizer on all but two of the titles.

John Scofield is now the sole guitarist, while Darryl 'The Munch' Jones handles bass guitar chores; long-time Davis sidekick Al Foster is still behind the drums, and percussion is in the hands of Mino Cinelu.

Miles is all over the record, often duetting with himself either on keyboards or overdubbed trumpet. The sum of its parts, it is useful to look at the album's component sessions. The title track, 'Code M.D.' and 'That's Right' all feature the soprano saxophone of Branford Marsalis. This writer met with the Marsalis frère when the youngster was looking forward to these dates. 'Miles doesn't want me to play funk,' he insisted.

'Decoy' kicks off with the Davis trumpet in from the edge, propelled along by the hard-hitting rhythm; Marsalis and Scofield add urgent solos while contributing to the theme. As an opener, it takes the breath away and repeated listening confirms that, yes, it really

is that good.

Those in attendance on the all-too-brief 'Robot 415' are Davis (trumpet and synthesizer), Irving (synthesizer, synth bass and electric drum programming) and Cinelu (percussion). Unfortunately, the track is over before it has begun.

'Code M.D.', with Marsalis major on hand, features Miles on open trumpet throughout, with a muted horn tooting in the rear, the percussion department adding by more of Irving's electric drum programming.

The trumpet lays out on 'Freaky Deaky', while the leader plays baying synthesizer over a walking 'Munch' bassline with Foster and Cinelu adding minimalist touches. 'I definitely want to hear that – Freaky Deaky!' comes to hoarse comment at the close of the cut.

Three Davis/Scofield compositions make up Side Two. The first and last, recorded live at Festival International de Jazz de Montreal, have Irving absent and Bill Evans on soprano duties.

The opener, 'What It Is', has more trumpet and synthesizer than even Davis can play live and is presumably the result of much studio overdubbing but the cut nearly leads into the final outing featuring Marsalis the elder. Arranged by Miles and Gil Evans, the tune also gives Scofield room for a lengthy workout before Branford contributes reflective soprano in his own solo space.

The potential listener should not be put off by all the electricery; this is no electro-funk item aimed at the dance floors, nor is it a retreat of faded jazz-rock ideas. *Decoy* is a brand new Miles Davis album with all that implies – a record as much for head as for the heart. He continues to amaze, the nearer he gets to his sixtieth birthday, as witnesses to his show at London's Royal Festival Hall will confirm. The Boss is back in business.

David Yeats

DREAMTIME Bunny Up (Affinity AFF 109)

Recorded: London – 14 April 1983.

Side One: 'The Boys Did It', 'Careful Driver', 'Lend An Ear, Part 1', 'Side Two: 'And So Tibet', 'Lend An Ear, Part 2', 'Bunny Up'.

Jim Dvorak (t); Nick Evans (tbn); Gary Curson (as); Roberto Bellatalla (b); Jim LeBaigue (d).

In the back streets of Kentish Town, a new music begins to stir... Dreamtime belie the sleepy implications of their name. This is a wideawake music, fresh and bustling, jostled into shape by the many months of a weekly residency at the Bull and Gate.

They knit together diverse strands, from New Orleans marches to Tibetan folk songs, in a free-wheeling free-form that can still turn on a half pence. For all the rhythmic solidity here, the focus is on the interplay of horns: the dry wit of Dvorak, a sprightly Evans and Curson's extravagant smears.

Their best moments come first and last; the gracious swing of 'The Boys Did It', the skittish traces of 'Careful Driver' and a bracing 'Bunny Up'. The two parts of 'Lend An Ear' don't shape up so well, seemingly lacking a focus; but 'And So Tibet' is a welcome change of pace, as Curson's alto unfolds almost luxuriously.

Bunny Up just lacks that full-blooded live attack with which the band mashed up Bracknell in July, but it's a briskly engaging debut all the same. No cats napping here!

Graham Lock

BILL EVANS

The Canadian Concert of Bill Evans
(Can-Am CA 1200)

Recorded: Quebec – July 1974.
Side One: 'Midnight Mood'; 'Elsa'; 'Sugar Plum'. Side Two: 'Morning Glory'; 'A Sleeping Bee'; 'How My Heart Sings'; 'A Time Remembered'; 'Beautiful Love'.

Bill Evans (p); Eddie Gomez (b); Martin Morrell (d).

BILL EVANS

The Paris Concert Edition Two (Elektra Musician 960311-1)

Recorded: Paris – November 26 1979.
Side One: 'Re: Person I Knew'; 'Gary's Theme'; 'Letter To Evan'; '34 Skidoo'. Side Two: 'Laurie'; 'Nardis'.

Bill Evans (p); Marc Johnson (b); Joe LaBarbera (d).

Because Evans' late recordings set no new precedents they are usually regarded as little more than the immaculate atrophy of a major figure: the execution perfunctory, the palette all too uniform in its choice of shades. Evans spent his last years polishing the gem of his talent instead of cutting it afresh, but because his manner was introspective to start with the real subtleties of this final period are almost hidden by his very reticence.

Even though their expression sometimes took a vehement form that the Evans of *Spring Leaves* might have been surprised at. The Canadian set (a broadcast transcription) shows how Eddie Gomez's muscular bass lined and prodded the piano, strong-arming any indulgence, here how 'Morning Glory' gradually toughens after its gentle opening, or the way 'A Sleeping Bee' – with the instruments playing the melody as a duet – is treated with something like abandon. If there is routine, it's suggested by the abstract virtuosity of 'Midnight Mood' and 'Elsa', brilliant playing that finally lacks purpose.

The Paris recording, by Evans' last trio, reshapes that skill. 'Re: Person I Knew' and 'Gary's Theme' are dark ballad readings that ripple with intricacies, their harmonies sifted through, fleshed out rather than forced by Johnson's less voluble bass lines. At his most inventive, Evans suggests a new phase of more intense dynamic contrasts, perhaps even a different setting of the trio's boundaries. The long reading of 'Nardis' focusses only after many remote areas have been explored by the solo introduction, and its bleak but single-minded atmosphere implies that new emotional insights were being developed. An essay, indeed, awaits on this fine music.

Richard Cook

KEN HYDER'S BIG TEAM

Under The Influence (Konnex ST S001)

Recorded: London.
Side One: 'Jute's Oot'; 'A Night In Benbecula'. Side Two: 'Owed To Philly Joe'; 'Hipsters and Flipsters and Soapy Soutar's Sisters'.

Ken Hyder (d); Tony Marsh (d); Paul Rogers (b); Roberto Bellatalla (b); Elton Dean (saxello, wooden flute); Chris Biscoe (saxes, tx); Ted Emmett (t); Nick Evans (tbn).

Like many of its ilk, this Big Team is rowdy and raucous, maintains a furious pace and ends up achieving its goal: a home win, with bags of action to keep the fans happy.

Actually, the flippancy of Hyder's titles disguises a serious and moving content. *Under The Influence* comprises the major part of a suite to commemorate the 'profound musical and social influence(s)' on Hyder's life and work. So 'Jute's Oot', dedicated to the jute mill workers of his native Dundee, begins with the thundering rhythms of the mill machinery and closes with a lament for the lives endured within its clatter; 'A Night in Benbecula', for two pipers and Sonny Rollings, recalls Talisker's potent blend of Celtic airs and wailing free-form; 'Owed To Philly Joe' is a roller-coasting, two-kit salute to jazz drummers; and 'Hipsters' is for two humourists, Lord Buckley and cartoonist Dudley D. Watkins, creator of Desperate Dan – aptly, it has rasping bittersweet horn cries and a thumping bass duet of wit and eloquence.

The emotion on this LP is a little hard to handle. Hyder's music gets right into the thick of things; and at times the intensity here verges on hysteria. Still, he's whetted my appetite for the remaining, unrecorded, parts of the suite, which include a piece for Mingus and Keir Hardie and a track called 'Hot Raps' for James Brown. After *Under The Influence*, we know Ken Hyder can say it loud!

Graham Lock

THE JAZZ DOCTORS

Intensive Care (Cadillac)

Recorded: London – 8 November 1983.
Side One: 'Little Melonae'; 'Ballad With One L'; 'Spooning'. Side Two: 'Lowelogy'; 'Blood On The Cross'; 'Lonely Woman'.
Billy Bang (vln); Frank Lowe (ts); Rafael Garrett (b); Dennis Charles (d).

As Val Wilmer points out in her sleeve-note, the magic touch of Ornette Coleman is never far from this Billy Bang set, recorded in London last year and featuring the quartet loping gleefully through six clamorous tunes. Coleman's vigorous and muscular style is clearly audible in uptempo pieces like 'Little Melonae' (a Jackie McLean composition) and 'Lowelogy'; and the closer 'Lonely Woman' is itself a Coleman composition, an earthy blues that restlessly vibrates like a piano wire.

Throughout the set, the brittle, parchment-like sound of Bang's violin is perfectly and provocatively complemented by Frank Lowe's tenor playing – the latter an intense distillation of the heart-searching demeanour of the Sixties avant-garde and a fragmentary approach to construction sometimes reminiscent of Dolphy. The church-organ-like gravity of Lowe's tone is all his own though, which makes him such an emotionally rousing saxophonist despite the occasional retreats into mannerism and repetition in his phrasing.

Dennis Charles, as ever, is a sheer pleasure to hear, and the uncluttered, dancing sound of his drums are both particularly well caught on this recording and unmistakably the rock on which the band's departures from its materials is founded. 'Lonely Woman' is the most moving outing on the album – and the longest – showing all the performers to best advantage and hinging conspicuously around Rafael Garrett's stirring, Haden-like bass.

Most infectious, though, is Butch Morris' 'Spooning', which sounds as if it could have escaped, mostly unscathed, from the Hit Parade of the early Fifties. A direct, refreshing, and penetratingly honest album.

John Fordham

ELVIN JONES

Earth Jones (Palo Alto PA 8016)

Recorded: Englewood Cliff, New Jersey – 10 February 1982.

Side One: 'Three Card Molly'; 'Is Seeing Believing'; 'The Top Of The Middle'. Side Two: 'Earth Jones'; 'Never Let Me Go'; 'Day And Night'.

Elvin Jones (d); David Liebman (ss, ff); Terumasa Hino (dt); George Mraz (b); Kenny Kirkland (p).

'A drummer should conduct', Elvin Jones once told the *New Yorker*. On this album, he does so very unostentatiously – it's by no means just a showcase for his solo prowess. Jones creates a complex rhythmic platform on which soloists can build in a manner which, if not as startling as it must have seemed in 1960, can still raise a storm.

Comparison with Jones's work with Coltrane is inevitable, and his own playing has changed little since then. David Liebman, who as composer, producer and soloist is a dominant influence on this album, owes much to middle-period Coltrane. By such a standard, anything would be anticlimactic, but there is much that is worthwhile here; George Mraz's unassuming bass, Terumasa Hino's opening solo on 'Three Card Molly', the virtuoso duet of Jones and Liebman on 'The Top Of The Middle'.

If there is nothing especially novel here, nor is there anything to disappoint admirers of Elvin Jones.

Jeremy Crump

WYNTON KELLY/GEORGE COLEMAN

Live In Baltimore (Affinity AFF(D)108)

Recorded: Baltimore – 22 September 1968.
Side One: 'Unit 7'. Side Two: 'Surrey With The Fringe On Top'. Side Three: 'Mister P.C.'. Side Four: 'Here's That Rainy Day'.
Wynton Kelly (p); George Coleman (ts); Ron McClure (b); Jimmy Cobb (d).

The great John Coltrane was responsible, among many other things, for bringing the very long solo into fashion. In the hands of less gifted imitators, this convention has produced many half-hours of excruciating tedium. George Coleman, though, is one disciple who set out to benefit scientifically from all that extra workshop time on the bandstand.

In the years since he left the Miles Davis Quintet, he gradually mastered the whole post-bop vocabulary of pentatonic, diminished and whole-tone scales, extended fourths, and Coltrane-derived substitute chord progressions on certain standards. He also worked hard on technique generally, increasing his speed and range, and learning Roland Kirk's once amazing but now quite widely-used practice of circular breathing (forcing air through the mouthpiece with the cheek muscles while inhaling through the nostrils), which means never having to pause for breath.

This double album doesn't catch him at his breathtaking best, however. It's very much a pick-up session, sounding as if Coleman dropped in unexpectedly to jam with Kelly's trio. The pianist takes the melody statements and probably called the tunes too (Coleman is clearly unfamiliar with Sam Jones' 'Unit 7' although all is well by the end of his second chorus.)

Even on the standards, Coleman occasionally sounds short of inspiration; a

pianist of the Herbie Hancock or McCoy Tyner school of harmony would probably have stimulated more adventurous lines from him. But Kelly's strong suit was swing, and, judged on that, this is another masterful display. With his lilting and infallibly logical flow of ideas, he never took a humdrum solo in his life.

The only real danger on this session is dropped by the engineer, who was caught napping at the start of 'Mr P.C.' and started the tapes rolling too late to catch the theme.

Jack Massarik

ROLAND KIRK

Early Roots (Affinity AFF 121)

Recorded: New York - 9 November 1956.
Side One: 'Roland's Theme'; 'Slow Groove'; 'Stormy Weather'. Side Two: 'The Nearness of You'; 'A La Carte'; 'Easy Living'; 'Triple Threat'.

Roland Kirk (ts, stritch, manzello); James Madison (p); Carl Pruitt (b); Henry Duncan (d).

The late Rahsaan Roland Kirk, besides laying a lot of wonderful music, inadvertently polarized the schism in the critical camp. He never played anything major, in the sense of 'Ko Ko' or 'Blue Seven', but the ravenous appetite of the man for music and some special pleading convinced many of us that he embodied the spirit of jazz. We are on tricky ground.

In many ways Rahsaan was closer to Moondog, pushing and pulling his music together to transcend the market-place. There is no evidence that he dreamed in terms of star ratings in *Dream Beat*. Being blind, his music fulfilled different functions for his life - for example, when I asked him about circular breathing techniques and his desire to enter the *Guinness Book of Records* (WHAAT?), he spoke of the essential reassurance for the sightless in feeling the unbroken hum of the sun on his head. Something that didn't stop was part of his aesthetic.

Not only critics, but musicians too have no idea of the techniques of playing three horns at once. Most dismissed that aspect of his art as a holdover from vaudeville, yet, in the same way that Bach is assumed to have conceived composition in counterpoint, this may have represented a poor man's tilt at the Olympian heights of orchestra arrangement.

All right. In terms of house marks, this early album racks up maybe forty out of 100, but definitely not a 'see me'. Rahsaan is at his best here on his root horn, the tenor saxophone, with both the hard bop 'Roland's Theme' and the r & b 'A La Carte' furnishing a fair sample of the man's inventive, untidy drive.

'Stormy Weather', overdubbed, comes nowhere near the aerie of Dolphy's version and the similarly overdubbed 'The Nearness of You' doesn't so much croon as wilt like a wallflower at a dance. Both of these are rotten. 'Slow Groove', as Stan Britt's fine sleeve-note points out, comes on with the imploring edge of Sonny Criss and the fast feisty asides of Bird. It's a keening stritch vehicle with lovely horn unisons.

The rhythm section is more than adequate. Received opinion has elevated Rahsaan with the Roils-Royce backing of Elvin, Richard Davis and Jaki Byard on 'Rip, Rig And Panic' over Rahsaan's spirit asprawl. That's probably right. Me, I no longer itemize these matters in this case that way.

Brian Case

COUNT BASIE Swingin' The Blues (Affinity AFS 1010)

Recorded: New York - 1937-39.
Side One: 'Swingin' The Blues'; 'John's Idea'; 'Blues And Sentimental'; 'Texas Shuffle'; 'Panassa Stomp'; 'Sent For You Yesterday'; 'You Can Depend On Me'; 'Every Tub'. Side Two: 'Jumppin' At The Woodside'; 'Time Out'; 'Live At Five'; 'Oh Lady Be Good'; 'Shorty George'; 'Out Tha Window'; 'Topsy'; 'Doggin' Around'.

Count Basie (p); Buck Clayton, Harry Edison (t); Lester Young, Herschel Evans (ts); Dickie Wells (tbn); Jimmy Rushing (vc) et al.

AL COOPER & HIS SAVOY SULTANS Jump Steady (Affinity AFS 1009)

Recorded: New York - 1938-41.
Side One: 'Jump Steady'; 'The Thing'; 'Looney'; 'Rhythm Doctor Man'; 'Gettin' In The Groove'; 'Jeep's Blues'; 'Stitches'; 'Jumppin' At The Savoy'. Side Two: 'We'd Rather Jump Than Swing'; 'Draggin' My Heart Around'; 'Little Sally Water'; 'Jumppin' The Blues'; 'Frenzy'; 'Sophisticated Jump'; 'Norfolk Ferry'; 'Second Balcony Jump'.

Al Cooper (as, bars, ct, arr); Rudy Williams (as); Grachan Moncur II (b) et al.

LIONEL HAMPTON Leapin' With Lionel (Affinity AFS 1000)

Recorded: New York and Los Angeles - 1942-49.
Side One: 'Flying Home'; 'Flying Home No. 2'; 'Hamp's Boogie Woogie'; 'Tamp's Boogie'; 'Beulah's Boogie'; 'Slide, Hamp, Slide'; 'Hey! Ba-Ba-Re-Bop'; 'Rockin' In Rhythm'. Side Two: 'Air Mail Special'; 'Cobb's Idea'; 'Hamp's Walkin' Boogie'; 'Red Top'; 'Midnight Sun'; 'Hamp's Boogie Woogie No. 2'; 'Beulah's Sister's Boogie'; 'Rag Mop'.

Lionel Hampton (vbcs, p); Illinois Jacquet, Arnett Cobb (ts); Earl Bostic (as); Milt Buckner (p) et al.

LOUIS JORDAN & THE TYMPANY S Look Out! (Charly CRB 1048)

Recorded: New York and Los Angeles - 1939-53.
Side One: 'Keep A Knockin'; 'Sam Jones Done Snagged His Britches'; 'You Run Your Mouth And I'll Run My Business'; 'Pinetop's Boogie Woogie'; 'Boogie Woogie Came To Town'; 'Saxa Woogie'; 'I Like 'Em Fat Like That'; 'They Raided The House'. Side Two: 'Ain't That Just Like A Woman'; 'Jack You're Dead'; 'Boogie Woogie Blue Plate'; 'Look Out'; 'Pettin' And Pokin'; 'Junco Partner'; 'House Party'; 'I Want You To Be My Baby'.

Louis Jordan (as, vc); Wild Bill Davis (p) et al.

JAY McSHANN Hootie's K.C. Blues (Affinity AFS 1006)

Recorded: Dallas and New York -

1941-42.

Side One: 'Hootie Blues'; 'Red River'; 'Confessin' The Blues'; 'Vine Street Boogie'; 'Fore Day Rider'; 'Sepian Bounce'; 'Hold 'Em Hootie'; 'Swingalatin'. Side Two: 'The Jumppin' Blues'; 'One Woman's Blues'; 'Get Me On Your Mind'; 'Daxter Blues'; 'Hootie's Ignorant Oil'; 'Now Confessin' The Blues'; 'Lonely Boy Blues'; 'So You Won't Jump'.

Jay McShann (p); Charlie Parker (as); Walter Brown (vc) et al.

LUCKY MILLINDER Apollo Jump (Affinity AFS 1004)

Recorded: New York - 1941-45.
Side One: 'Apollo Jump'; 'Ride, Red, Ride'; 'That's All'; 'Shipyard Social Function'; 'Hurry, Hurry!'; 'Shout, Sister, Shout'; 'Mason Flyer'; 'Slide Mr. Trombone'; 'There's Good Blues Tonight'. Side Two: 'Let Me Off Uptown'; 'Rock Me'; 'Little John Special'; 'Who Threw The Whiskey Down The Well'; 'Trouble In Mind'; 'Big Fat Mama'; 'Rock Dancer'; 'All The Time (7)'; 'I Want A Tall Skinny Papa'.
Lucky Millinder (cond, vc); Tab Smith (as, arr); Sam The Man Taylor (ts); Dizzy Gillespie (t); Bill Doggett (p, arr); Panama Francis (d); Wynonie Harris, Sister Rosetta Tharpe (vc) et al.

CHICK WEBB In The Groove (Affinity AFS 1007)

Recorded: New York - 1934-39.
Side One: 'Don't Be That Way'; 'What A Shuffle'; 'Blue Lou'; 'Go Harlem'; 'You'll Have To Swing It'; 'Strictly Live'; 'Rock It For Me'; 'Squeeze Me'. Side Two: 'If Dreams Come True'; 'A-Tisket, A-Tasket'; 'Azure'; 'Spinnin' The Webb'; 'Liza'; 'Undecided'; 'Tain't What You Do'; 'In The Groove At the Grove'.
Chick Webb (d); Taft Jordan (t); Edgar Sampson (as, arr); Ella Fitzgerald (vc) et al.

There seems to be a great divide between big-band fans and fans of hardcore jazz. No doubt the band specialists have found that most small-group work is too challenging for their tastes, whereas 'the big sound' can be not only excitingly predictable but predictably exciting. Certainly you don't have to be motivated by nostalgia for an era you may not even have lived through) to re-create mentally the anticipation and subsequent fulfillment of an expected climax - just as in sexual activity. And surely it's a narrow definition which condemns as masturbatory anything other than pure improvisation...

But, in any case, the demarcation is not so simple. For a start, there is small-group sounds such as trad jazz, Fifties rock & roll and - dare I say - bebop, which are regarded by some of their fans as being totally fixed forms, and therefore enjoyable in the manner associated with big-band freaks. And, for another thing, the mental re-

creation of a performance's original impact is necessary to the appreciation of each and every classic of jazz history.

Anyone with an interest in those classics needs to pay attention to big-band music from time to time, if only because from about 1930 to at least 1945 the band scene was where the new developments in jazz were introduced. (To be sure, the after-hours jam-sessions gave players the opportunity to relax and sometimes to innovate in public, but that was a tiny public of cognoscenti and fellow musicians.) The nationwide audience, and indeed musicians across the country, became aware of these innovations through the brief solos recorded or broadcast by members of the leading big bands.

So these days people listen for the first time to the late Thirties Basie band in order to hear the revolutionary work of early Lester Young, heard on nearly every track of *Swingin' The Blues*, and of other forward-looking players such as Clayton and Edison. Similarly, the early Forties McShann band was the setting for the first four issued solos by the young Charlie Parker, destined to become even more influential than Young.

It takes a little more familiarity with prevailing styles to realise that the way these two Kansas City bands knocked out new listeners was not only with their soloists, but with the looseness of the rhythm-section and of the entire ensemble. Listen to Basie's 'Jumpin' At The Woodside' or the slower 'Live At Five' or to McShann's 'Jumpin' The Blues' (a Parker arrangement, incidentally) and you see why their beat proved so irresistible – still is, in fact.

The previous rhythmic orthodoxy, and that's no criticism, is typified by the Chick Webb band who reigned supreme at Harlem's Savoy Ballroom in the early Thirties. Drummer Webb who, like the more modern Jo Jones with Basie, almost never soloed (apart from the intro and coda to 'Liza') can be heard imparting a variety of textures and a lovely feel to the sections and the otherwise second-rank soloists. In Edgar Sampson, he had an imaginative arranger whose originals 'Don't Be That Way', 'Stompin' At The Savoy' (not available to Affinity) and 'If Dreams Come True' were all covered by Benny Goodman – who even managed to get his name added to the composer credits of the last-named. (I should perhaps mention in passing that the *Big Band Bounce* and *Boogie* series, despite concentrating on the black bands, includes the work of two of the groovier white outfits (Woody Herman and Charlie Barnett) plus suitable selections by Andy Kirk and Jimmie Lunceford. Further goodies are expected next year.)

After Webb's success in featuring Ella Fitzgerald and then his untimely death, the regular band at the Savoy was Al Cooper's Savoy Sultans which, with a maximum of nine members, 'had

enough rhythm for a thousand-piece orchestra', in Dizzy Gillespie's estimation. Despite the smaller forces, the soloists didn't predominate, except for the chameleonic Rudy Williams (for whom Mingus later wrote his 'Eulogy'), while the ensemble and its simple riffs were everything.

Panama Francis, who revived the Savoy Sultans format in the late Seventies, was for several years the drummer with Lucky Millinder's Forties band whose line-up was originally assembled by Bill Doggett. Its frequent personnel changes, a consequence of wartime, coincided with a denial of the free-thinking Basie approach and a general stiffening of big-band arteries, but there were a couple of portents of things to come. (P.S. Despite the sleeve Gillespie has only one solo here, on the eponymous 'Little John Special'; and, while other reviews have mentioned that 'All The Time' has been accidentally replaced by something else, possibly previously unissued, they have not pointed to the evidence – a direct quote from 'Emanon' – that it must be a Dizzy composition.)

What is particularly fascinating about the Millinder band is a distinct pre-echo of r & b. Not only did Wynonie Harris make his record debut with these two 1944 sides but one of his predecessors was the 20-year-old Sister Rosetta Tharpe, who sang a mixture of religious and secular tunes, all in the same gospelised style, and accompanied herself with a funky guitar. Unfortunately the combination is like oil and water, and the comes across as having more vitality than the rest of the band put together, but a more subtle blend was already being achieved (with a much smaller group, of course) by former Chick Webb sideman Louis Jordan, featured in a fascinating 15-year cross-section of lesser-known tracks on the *Charly* label.

One of the many other Jordan reissues calls him 'the last swinger – the first rocker', which is an exaggeration on both counts. In any case, what about Lionel Hampton, who successfully took over the gospel backbeat and whose 'Flying Home No. 2' and 'Hamp's Boogie Woogie' stand at the mid-point between jazz and r & b?

But such thinking in categories misses the essential fact that this was an evolving music, the popular dance music of the day. It's revealing how all the veterans of this era emphasise the necessity of a driving pulse and – reverting to sex for a moment – the mutual stimulation afforded by the performance of a band and the response of the dancers. No wonder that, even after concerts superseded ballrooms in their working lives, the big-bands still prided themselves on their showmanship and their ability to get across to an audience, while condemning younger musicians as 'only interested in playing for themselves'.

Brian Priestley

LEE KONITZ–HAROLD DANKO Wild As Springtime (GFM Records LP 8002)

Recorded: Glasgow – 29–30 April 1984.
Side One: 'She's As Wild As Springtime'; 'Hairy Canary'; 'Ezz-thetic'; 'Duende'. *Side Two:* 'Chopin Prelude No 20'; 'Spinning Waltz'; 'Silly Samba'; 'Hi, Beck'; 'Ko'.
Lee Konitz (as); Harold Danko (p).

LEE KONITZ–HAROLD DANKO–JAY LEONHART Dovetail (Sunyside Records SSC 1003)

Recorded: New York – 25–27 February 1983.

Side One: 'I Want To Be Happy'; 'The Night Has A Thousand Eyes'; 'Counter-point'; 'Dovetail'. *Side Two:* 'Sweet Georgia Brown'; 'Alone Together'; 'Cherokee'; 'Penthouse Serenade'.

Lee Konitz (as); Harold Danko (p); Jay Leonhart (b).

It takes an extra-special kind of jazz musician to carry off the kind of duo concept that can produce some extra-special kind of music. Konitz is one, as demonstrated, perhaps best of all, with his fondly remembered *The Lee Konitz Duets* (Milestone MSP 9013). Quite obviously, too, pianist Danko has that extra-special quality. And the juxtaposition of his sensitive, elegant keyboard contributions to Konitz's highly personal, ever-inquisitive alto results in some absolutely delightful improvised music on both LPs.

With no disrespect to Leonhart – a fine player, both in solo as well as in basic rhythmic support – his presence throughout the *Sunyside* collection is hardly important, especially when you've heard the GFM set first. Still, the bassist's contributions – especially on 'Georgia' and 'Alone Together' – are never less than sympathetic and apposite. Perhaps the most satisfying tracks are 'Counter-point' and the title number wherein all three players are totally *en rapport*.

But if *Dovetail* is an eminently recommendable album, then *Springtime* is something else. Not only does it just have the edge, recording-wise, but this 1984 get-together finds both Danko and Konitz at the top of their game, individually as well as collectively.

Intiguely to hear completely fresh re-workings of UK classics from another era – 'Ezz-thetic'; 'Hi, Beck' – but just as rewarding are the much more contemporary pieces. Including an experimental-sounding 'Ko', a wholly delightful 'Spinning Waltz' (with some sublime Konitz), and exceptional re-workings of two Corea tunes ('Canary', 'Duende'). Congratulations to all at GFM who have followed their impressive *Giant Strides*/Tommy Smith LP (LP 8001) with another which, in its own, completely different way, is at least as good.

Stan Britt

BOOKER LITTLE Victory And Sorrow (Affinity AFF 124)

Recorded: August/September 1961.
Side One: 'Victory and Sorrow'; 'Forward Flight'; 'Looking Ahead'. *Side Two:* 'If I Should Lose You'; 'Calling Softly'; 'Booker's Blues'; 'Matilde'.

Booker Little (t); Julian Priest (tb);

George Coleman (ts), Don Friedman (p), Reggie Workman (b), Pete La Roca (d).

Little's early death and few recordings smudge any attempt to evaluate a talent of tantalising but unfulfilled possibilities. If, like his sometime partner Eric Dolphy, he was in transition from hard bop to new things, his natural affinity for a silvery, singing tone and the pace of 4/4 suggested no imminent barrier-busting.

The Bethlehem re-issue is a less valuable showcase for the trumpeter's own playing that his one quartet date (*The Legendary Quartet Album*) but the six originals show the curious taste of his writing: a tilt at Spanish trails and a deal of poetic melancholy – more sorrow than victory here. The unusual voicings given to the horns in 'Forward Flight' and 'Calling Softly' seem rather pointlessly enterprising, although 'Matilde' is both haunting and disquieting, a ballad of very serious mind.

Unfortunately, Little's companions offer only faceless support. The risks taken by the leader in his solos aren't always justified, and he nearly comes apart on the title tune, but it adds to the fascination of a musician whose sensibility was rare in jazz. In 'If I Should Lose You' he extends only to a grave embellishment on the melody, and poignancy alone sustain the music.

Richard Cook

BRANFORD MARSALIS Scenes In The City (CBS 25952)

Recorded: New York – April, November 1983.

Side One: 'No Backstage Pass'; 'Scenes In The City'; 'Solstice'. Side Two: 'Waiting For Tain'; 'No Sidestepping'; 'Parable'.

Branford Marsalis (ts, ss, voice): Ron Carter, Ray Drummond, Charnett Moffett or Phil Bowler (b); Marvin Smith or Jeffrey Watts (d); Robin Eubanks (tb); John Longo (t); Mulgrew Miller or Kenny Kirkland (p); Wendell Pierce (narrator); Ed Williams (radio announcer).

Branford Marsalis is an interesting case. He has worked with Clark Terry, Art Blakey, VSOPI, L. Wynton Marsalis, and is currently with Miles Davis; yet he has a poor reputation. Much of this is due to his being overshadowed by brother Wynton, but it is true that his earlier work, on alto, lacks bite and sounds rather weak. No doubt partly in an attempt to overcome this he has switched (successfully) to tenor and soprano.

This album, which should improve his standing, kicks off with the magnificent, totally improvised 'No Backstage Pass', featuring the perfectly suited trio of Carter, Smith and Marsalis.

Like 'No Backstage Pass', the second track 'Scenes In The City' stands out, but for a totally different reason; it doesn't work very well. This piece, written by Mingus, features the words of Lanston Hughes and the background sounds of Greenwich Village, together with very short musical segments, mainly used for emphasis. The music is too disjointed to be effective, and although it does grow on you, the space could have been used more effectively.

'Solstice', which was inspired by Coltrane's 'Equinox', and 'Waiting For Tain' are strong up-tempo pieces, containing superb piano solos by Kirkland and the Tyner-like Miller

respectively. In contrast Miller and Kirkland's written contributions are excellent ballads which may prove to be Marsalis's strength. Incidentally Tain is not a mistake: it does not refer to Coltrane.

Much of this album covers fairly familiar territory, indeed most tracks could easily have fitted into Miles' early sixties repertoire. However the very passion, style, taste and technique employed by the musicians negate any ideas of redundancy. This type of music is excellent, and the more that is available the better.

For a 24-year-old Marsalis shows warmth, skill, versatility and much promise. As yet he is an immature stylist, but so was Coltrane when he joined Miles aged 30, and look what happened to him. Why not buy this album, you might find yourself with a classic.

Calvin Smith

JACKIE MCLEAN/FREDDIE REDD The Connection (Bopcity BOP-4)

Recorded: New York – 1960.

Side One: 'Who Killed Cock Robin'; 'Wiggin'; 'Music Forever'. Side Two: 'Time To Smile'; 'Theme For Sister Salvation'; 'Jim Dunn's Dilemma'; 'O.D.'.

Jackie McLean (as); Freddie Redd (p); Michael Mattos (b); Larry Ritchie (d).

It's true that Bird, Diz, Monk and Bud Powell were the founding fathers of modern jazz, but bebop had its second wave too, and occasionally it produced something special.

In my view this album is a masterpiece, the most perfect realization of a bebop suite ever achieved, and a brilliant example of the whole being greater than the sum of its individual parts.

Originally the music was designed to complement the action of a 'kitchen sink' type of stage play dealing with a day in the desperate lives of a group of heroin addicts. The themes work well enough on that level, but gradually they take on a compelling world of their own. And, not least, they are all natural vehicles for improvisation, so that all the solos are of a consistently high standard.

McLean, in particular has never played better. Check his work on 'Music Forever' or 'Jim Dunn's Dilemma', where the ideas tumble out with an invention, fluency and conviction he never matched on later recordings. Behind him the rhythm section cooks along, with Redd, like Horace Silver, giving the soloist all the propulsion he needs and contributing superbly angular, driving solos of his own.

Jack Massariki

ROSCOE MITCHELL More Cutouts (Cecma, CECMA 1003)

Recorded: Italy – February 1981.

Side One: 'Song For The Little Feet – take A'; 'Mix'; 'More Cutouts'. Side Two: 'Fanfare For Talib'; 'Round Two'; 'Song For The Little Feet – take B'.

Roscoe Mitchell (leader, ts, as, ss, f); Hugh Ragin (t, four-valve piccolo trumpet, flgh); Tani Tabbal (d, vbs, perc).

Roscoe Mitchell is emerging – along with Anthony Braxton – as perhaps the most significant leader and performer in jazz since the death of Eric Dolphy. Like Dolphy, his musical signature imbues the whole performance, not just his own solo voice. Like

Braxton, he produces a music that is entire even at its most fragmented, as in the two long cuts here, 'Mix' and 'Round Two'.

The textural echo of Dolphy's 'Out To Lunch' stems mainly from Tani Tabbal's vibes and from the staccato, upper-register ensemble work of the horns. Mitchell uses space and silence with confident precision and absorbs an electric mass of material without urgency: blues in the title track, a martial bugle sound in Hugh Ragin's 'Fanfare For Talib', Third World (African?) Amerindian (?) rhythms and tonalities in 'Song For The Little Feet'.

More Cutouts is chamber jazz in the best sense; intimate, utterly unself-indulgent. Contemporary small group playing at its best.

Brian Morton

DON PULLEN Evidence Of Things Unseen (Black Saint BSR 0080)

Recorded: New York – 28, 29 September 1983.

Side One: 'Evidence Of Things Unseen'; 'Victory Dance (For Sharon)'. Side Two: 'In The Beginning (For Nick)'; 'Perseverance'; 'Rejoice'.

Don Pullen (p).

I've heard Don Pullen play hard and fast and blue, but the scope of this turbulent triumph takes the breath. *Evidence Of Things Unseen* is the best solo piano I've heard since Cecil Taylor's *Garden*: it's not epochal like that majestic work – Pullen is no innovator – but it still hits the heights and must be Pullen's most ambitious set to date.

'Evidence' the track is steeped in the tradition; rhapsodic blues beset by a modern agitation that wracks itself inside out before the final return to calm. 'Victory Dance' starts with a rolling swing reminiscent of Abdullah Ibrahim, rises to a light-headed jubilation, goes topsy turvy with joy, then recalls Ibrahim again in a climactic tumble of chords. 'In The Beginning (For Nick)', the standout track, takes up the troubled emotions of 'Evidence' and carries them headlong. It begins with tense stop/start runs and becomes increasingly disturbed as furious right-hand flurries are undercut by a crunching left-hand. Pullen evolves the dialogue in a brilliantly dramatic fashion as it hurtles into tumult but never loses its sense of coherence.

The last two tracks briefly celebrate the tradition. 'Perseverance' is a blues which Pullen treats with garrulous affection, while 'Rejoice' is a gospel riff that bafflingly fades out almost as soon as it starts. It's the longer tracks which count, though, and they make *Evidence Of Things Unseen* the year's surprise heavyweight hit. Pullen all the stops out, you bet!

Graham Lock

HOWARD RILEY For Four On Two Two (Affinity AFF 110)

Recorded: July 1982.

Side One: 'Pedal Points'; 'For Four On Two Two'; 'Somethings'. Side Two: 'Activate'; 'Unfold'.

Howard Riley (p).

Just before World War II the pianist Albert Ammons recorded a piece he called 'Bass Goin' Crazy'. It's a title that could serve as a

snappier alternative to 'Pedal Points', just as Ammon's absorption in the subtle variations of boogie woogie has a parallel in Howard Riley's constant inventiveness within a strategy of reiteration.

Both the concept and the virtuosity of that track (amazing, as it seems no overdubbing took place) testify to the progress Riley has made during the past decade towards operating in a self-contained way, a development that also seems an extension of his instincts as a composer, his need to shape an entire performance. That explains why Riley, unlike some quite distinguished soloists, is a good finisher. The final minute-and-a-half of 'Active' provide a stunning example, the tension arising from the creative nagging which goes on between left and right hands. Almost as effective is the conclusion of 'Unfold', another longish piece, full of wide chords and intervals, emphasizing space rather than energy or mobility.

'For Four On Two Two' is in common time, eschewing bass chords in favour of the kind of roving bass line that Lennie Tristano once used so spicily. The interaction between top and bottom, the flexibility alongside the functionalism, makes this track adventurous as well as historically aware. 'Somethings', a sort of busy ballad, very active yet somehow highly legato, also hints at the past, with chord changes reminiscent of Tadd Dameron's, even conveying a whiff of Monk's harmonic density – although not of his scuttling rhythms.

The LP, in fact, is one of Howard Riley's boldest, and further confirmation of the maturity that has distinguished his work in recent times. **Charles Fox**

JOHN SURMAN-KARIN KROG-PIERRE FAVRE Such Winters Of Memory (ECM 1254)

Recorded: Oslo – December 1982.

Side One: 'Saturday Night'; 'Sunday Morning'; 'My Friend'; 'Seaside Postcard 1951'. Side Two: 'On The Wing Again'; 'Expressions'; 'Mother Of Light'; 'Persepolis'.

John Surman (bs, ss, bass clt, recorder, p, synth, voc); Karin Krog (vd, Oberheim ring modulator, tamboura); Pierre Favre (d).

A degree in electronic engineering is needed to establish who does exactly what, and how, on this ingenious album – but why try?

Producer Manfred Eicher doesn't believe in sleeve-notes – and after reading some of them I don't altogether blame him – so while all the owners of synthesisers and ring modulators get down to some heavy digital analysis, the rest of us can sit back and enjoy the fruitful collaboration of three highly musical minds.

Karin Krog's duets with Archie Shepp established her as a singer of originality, taste and reliable pitch, with a pleasing touch of sensuality and intelligence always present in her voice.

Surman has been recognised as a virtuoso soloist ever since his Extrapolation album with John McLaughlin, which remains a classic. Indeed for many he is more rewarding on record than in person, where the adrenalin of the big occasion all too quickly sends him into the stratosphere.

The recording studio seems to bring out the reflective, slyly dramatic, side of his nature. I don't know if anyone has ever

commissioned him to supply a film score but they should. He has the ability to create a variety of different moods and sustain them at unusual length, selecting a telling phrase, repeating it, reshaping it, transposing it, and finally sensing the right moment to abandon it and move on.

Favre does a good job. His drumming is tactful and effective, rumbling along, colouring and shading the picture in a way that never monopolises the attention. Krog might set up a choral effect. Surman drifts in – occasionally duetting with himself by double-tracking – and the mood intensifies, then naturally subsides.

This is music to dream to; something to set the listener's visual imagination wandering. And I'm sure it's not as easy as they make it seem... **Jack Massarik**

CECIL TAYLOR Praxis (Praxis CM 104/5)

Recorded: Italy – July 1968.

Side One: 'Praxis Part I'. Side Two: 'Praxis Part II'. Side Three: 'Praxis Part III'. Side Four: 'Praxis Part IV'.

Cecil Taylor (p).

Is this really from 1968, as the sleeve-note states? (That's the limit of the information there.) Cecil Taylor's output has been so insistently of a piece that it can be phenomenally difficult to set it in 'periods'. Perhaps the effort is wasted, imposing arbitrary divisions and categories on the most individual and uncategoryisable piano style

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Praxis – thought in action, thoughtful action – is Taylor's *Kunst der Fuge*, a long and elaborate pianistic self-examination to set alongside the multi-volume trio set *Nuits de la Fondation Maeght*. The piano can be an appealingly prosaic and discursive instrument in jazz but Taylor makes it sing through four sides – one and a quarter hours – with something close to that 'extra hand' illusion that comes from perfect keyboard/pedal co-ordination. Keith Jarrett probably just went out and out his throat.

Brian Morton

JOHN THICAI

Live In Athens (Praxis CM 101)

Recorded: Praxis Jazz Festival, Athens – 20 October 1980.

Side One: 'Saluting Praxis'; 'Freeing Up The Second'; 'Song Of The Islands'. *Side Two:* 'That One For Whom?'; 'Frobenius Stomp'; 'Elephants Never Forget'.

John Thicai (as, vd).

Continent (Praxis CM 102)

Recorded: Athens – 18 October 1980.

Side One: 'Marching Cara Cara'; 'I Saw A Continent'; 'To The President Of The Heavenly Empire'; 'The Indians Of The Continent'; 'The Dignity In The Belly'. *Side Two:* 'Juansichai Is Badder'; 'Maja Thurup'; 'Oktana A.E.'; 'Towards The Force World Age'.

John Thicai (as, p, vd, various dc); Hartmut Geerken (p, sn, harp, vcl, assorted perc, etc).

John Thicai LPs have been a rare occurrence these last few years, so two new albums at once is almost like flooding the market. A very welcome flood, too. I still remember the one time I saw Thicai play live, at the Roundhouse in 1979: it was a stunning exhibition of alto sax, the music reeling from his horn in fiercely twisting, singing lines, spiralling with passion, vibrant with thought.

Live in Athens rekindles my enthusiasm and even, at its peak, matches that memory's golden glow – like on the Monkish duck and weave through 'That One For Whom?', the tongue-in-cheek trumpeting of 'Elephants Never Forget' and a rapturous 'Song Of The Islands'.

Other tracks are less riveting: the opening 'Saluting Praxis' leans on a nagging repetition from which it never breaks loose, while 'Frobenius Stomp' includes Thicai's ill-fated attempts at persuading the audience to sing. But each time he picks up his alto, that gnarled, husky-edged tone bites with such plangency, such nous, it's a delight to listen.

I'd have liked more alto on *Continent* too, and less of the percussion interludes that bring to mind the famous quotation about each man marching to a different drum. Hartmut Geerken plays about thirty instruments here – everything from Sudanese zebra drum to beer can to Peking opera gong – but the results never quite fulfill the promise of such a mouthwatering array of sounds (yes, he gargles too).

I also wish the two men had not been inveigled into a kind of random singalong, which too often sounds like they've caught a vital appendage in the strings of the swarmandal harp! Only once, in Geerken's squawking response to Thicai's squally alto on 'Maja Thurup', is the voice used to good effect.

For the rest, *Continent* has its moments, especially on the livelier side two, but hardly startles. Go for the solo.

Graham Lock

THE HENRY THREADGILL SEXTET Just The Facts And Pass The Bucket (About Time AT 1005)

Recorded: New York.

Side One: 'Gateway'; 'Cover'; 'Black Blues'. *Side Two:* 'Just The Facts And Pass The Bucket'; 'Cremation'; 'A Man Called Trinity Deliverance'.

Henry Threadgill (f, dt, as, bar s); Fred Hopkins (b); Pheeroan Aklaaf (perc); John Betsch (perc); Olu Dara (cnt); Craig Harris (tbn); Deirdre Murray (cello).

When Was That? (About Time AT 1004)

Recorded: New York.

Side One: 'Melin'; '10 To 1'; 'Just B'. *Side Two:* 'When Was That?'; 'Soft Suicide At The Baths'.

Henry Threadgill (f, bs, f, ctt, as, ts); Craig Harris (tbn); Olu Dara (cnt); Fred Hopkins (b); Brian Smith (piccolo b); Pheeroan Aklaaf (d); John Betsch (d).

Lined up in a graveyard, decked out in dark suits, white gloves and idiosyncratic hats – the picture of The Henry Threadgill Sextet that adorns the sleeve of *Just The Facts* fits this music to a T: macabre, mournful, breezily bizarre. Death is a special guest on both these albums, leaving a calling-card in titles like 'Soft Suicide At The Baths' and 'Cremation' or intruding in subtler ways through the elegiac splendour of 'Melin', the stormy, funereal splendour of 'Just B'.

As antithesis, the Sextet (all seven!) perform with enormous zest and relish, enlivening the soberest moments with an undercurrent of crackling energy. When they hit an 'all-out, exuberant swing, on 'Gateway' and 'When Was That?', the rush is so strong you feel like cheering.

Threadgill's music, like that of AACM associates the Art Ensemble of Chicago, is both drenched in irony and mindful of the Black tradition, from brass fanfares to urban blues. Ellington's spirit hovers here too, bringing the inspiration behind Threadgill's brilliant use of texture and tone – though in terms of mood the sombre brooding, flickering intensity and gallows humour recall Shostakovich as much as Duke or the Windy City warriors.

Two drummers and two bassists (or bassist plus cellist) give Threadgill great rhythmic depth on which to arrange his horn colours and he blends Dara's warmth, Harris's lugubrious growls and his own roars – from jaunty flute to sardonic alto – to bloodcurdling effect.

Morbid tunes executed with fiery precision – make for a tingling dialectic of vigour and rage; but, despite its predilection for darker atmospheres, this jazz noir burns with bright invention. Weird, wonderful; scary fun.

Graham Lock

MAL WALDRON One Entrance, Many Exits (Palo Alto PA 8014)

Recorded: Mento Park, California – 4 January 1982.

Side One: 'Golden Golson'; 'One Entrance, Many Exits'; 'Chazz Jazz'. *Side Two:* 'Herbal Syndrome'; 'How Deep Is The Ocean'; 'Blues In 4 By 3'.

Mal Waldron (p); Joe Henderson (ts); David Friesen (b); Billy Higgins (d).

Perhaps it was inevitable that Mal Waldron's work over the last twenty years, during which time he's been mostly based in Germany,

should have suffered relative neglect. His activities in the Fifties, which included membership of bands led by Mingus and Dolphy, two years as Billie Holiday's last regular accompanist, and numerous recordings as Prestige house pianist, would be difficult to follow.

Waldron's encounter with Mingus had a profound impact on his composition and improvisation. That the experimental spirit of the Jazz Workshop has remained with him is apparent from recent recordings with Steve Lacy, and from *One Entrance, Many Exits*.

This release is the more welcome since it not only features Waldron as composer, solo pianist, in duet with David Friesen and in a trio setting, but it also reunites him with Joe Henderson, whose solo on 'How Deep Is The Ocean' is a high point in an album which deserves wide attention.

Jeremy Crump

WEATHER REPORT

Domino Theory (CBS 25839)

Recorded: California, Japan – 1984.

Side One: 'Can It Be Done'; 'D' Waltz'; 'The Peasant'. *Side Two:* 'Predator'; 'Blue Sound-Note 3'; 'Swamp Cabbage'; 'Domino Theory'.

Zawinul (kybds); Wayne Shorter (saxes); Omar Hakim (d); Victor Bailey (b); Jose Rossy (perc); Carl Anderson (vocals, on 'Can It Be Done' only).

With the news of the departure of Jaco Pastorius and Peter Erskine from Weather Report, most people, myself included, feared a return to less powerful work. This fear was only slightly alleviated by Procession, their last album, which was good but patchy. However *Domino Theory* represents a return to form.

From the rhythmic feel of 'D' Waltz' to Shorter's innovative composition 'Swamp Cabbage', from the richly evocative 'The Peasant' to the soul ballad 'Can It Be Done', this is an outstanding album. Few other bands are capable of such a wide range of expression, while still sounding distinctive. This is classic Weather Report, up to their usual standard, but that doesn't mean that it's a 'treating water' album; it's not. This band continues to develop and experiment, fruitfully.

A note on the present line-up. Zawinul is of course in excellent form. As Miles Davis said, he is the best bass-line writer in the business, and this talent is shown on the superb 'D' Waltz'.

Wayne Shorter's versatility is much in evidence on this album. 'D' Waltz' features a hard tenor sound, produced using the electrically modulated 'Lyricon', while 'Predator' showcases a softer, more stylised tone. Unfortunately none of his wonderfully distinctive soprano is present; another time maybe.

Zawinul himself has emphasised the drum ascendancy of the present outfit which is shown on their live work, but not here. Unfortunately on this LP, and the preceding album (*Procession*), Omar Hakim has eschewed his naturally bombastic Alphonse Mouzon-like sound in favour of a fast, lighter approach.

Victor Bailey, whose work has been pushed to the fore as a beefy distinctive style, in no way derivative, and not particularly inferior to his illustrious predecessor's, heresy though it may be to say so.

This is an excellent album, despite the cover. It's a worthy addition to any collection.

Calvin Smith



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► continued from page 15

company, my heart doesn't feel it, but you also think, if I keep this company I may get some goodies.' He bursts out laughing. 'But you don't get the goodies, you get messed up. So put your trust in your Lord, for on that day when you are confronted with the Creator, you will have no helper and no power of refusal.

'The beauty of Islam, or anything you believe, if you are a true believer, is that there's an answer: put your trust in the Creator.'

DEALING WITH DEATH

Er, yes. I'm feeling a little zonked by this. Luckily, Katy takes over the questioning. Does this trust connect with what you were saying about rehearsal and prayer? she asks. I think a lot of young musicians have the notion that jazz is hard, that you have to practise a lot, but your music sounds so simple.

Ibrahim shrugs. 'It's like everything, even your religion, if it becomes a burden to you, then you must leave it alone. When you say young musicians think jazz is difficult to play, maybe it's got to do with the interpretation of what technique is.'

'For example, we study martial arts and the traditional training for martial arts is that you take one basic technique and practise only that technique for a year, then you move on to the next technique. So it comes down to trust and it's what divides the believers from the non-believers: 'cause if you're a believer, you'll know that you have all the time in eternity to finish what you started. It's when you become a materialist as you have to get it done before you die, so you cram in as much technique as possible.' He chuckles at the absurdity. 'Like, "I'm gonna get this down 'cause I'm gonna be dead".'

'You have to go through the process of practising the basics but the basic training has nothing to do with perfecting a technique to use that technique. The basic training is to perfect yourself. Traditional training was to train oneself to deal with death. I think really any kind of training teaches you how to die. The Chinese have a saying, the more you sweat in peace the less you bleed in war.'

'So, young musicians - I think maybe it's not that they say the music is hard but the discipline is. The reason for it has gone, we're too materialistic. Nowadays, you can play three chords and make a million dollars, so there's no reason to practise, the intention is to reap the most material benefits in the shortest possible time. But all the traditional players are, like, trained in the Samurai mentality. We used to practise like that, ten, twelve hours a day, just intent on perfecting our art, which means perfecting yourself.'

STATES OF TRANCE

I'd also like to know, says Katy, to what extent you plan your music. Or does it just arrive at your fingertips?

Ibrahim laughs. 'Allah says, you plan and I plan, too, and I'm the best of planners.'

'We have a book for concerts that we play but we don't play the same every night. You know Japanese Noh theatre? Noh theatre is, like, the eventual state of bringing the mind, body, soul - bop! - together at one point. The Japanese say Mu Shin, No Mind.'

'Now, the playing of what people term jazz comes from what we call in Islam Tariqa, a state of trance. At home we have chants - you say: "There is no God but He"; say that for five, ten hours, you'll get stoned! I've seen them: one guy thinks he's a rabbit, one guy climbs up the wall... he hoots with mirth.'

'Traditionally, people would call them mad, you know. People in a trance - you could cut them and there would be no blood. Tariqa! That's where the music comes from and its purpose is to put you in that stage, where you are Mu Shin, No Mind. A Japanese swordsman said, "Under the sword lifted high, there is Hell to make you tremble, but you go ahead anyway if you are No Mind."

'That's the Noh theatre. They can never repeat a movement. That's Sumi painting, too. They don't rub it out and do it again, it's like - ah, ah, ah, finished! Same with the music.'

He frowns for a moment, then adds reflectively, 'And that's the war that's being fought on this planet. Between the normal people and the crazy ones.'

Mind and No Mind, says Katy.

'Right! And the crazy ones are winning it. There's no way you can overcome it. That's what's happening in Iran, Beirut. People with No Mind. Completely out of their mind. You must be to drive a truck with 2000 lb of explosives into a building.'

'It's what happened in Vietnam, too. It's happening all over the world. And there's no way you can fight against that kind of war unless you are prepared to do the same thing. Now, if you are worried about your mortgage or how you're going to die...' he chuckles softly.

'So, with the music, it's that state of No Mind. You play the music and it takes the audience with you. The music serves as a natural narcotic to drug you, so we can fly into the darker recesses of your soul, where you would not normally dare to go yourself. What did Duke say? "Come with me to my emerald rock garden, where cellophane trees grow a mile high and the darkness is just a transluency".'

Ibrahim smiles, his mind on Ellington. 'Duke says the blues - you know, people are always asking, what is the blues?' He grins. 'Man, I read all the books on it. I exhausted the public library and then I said, get me more books! They say, like, "The blues is a flattened third and a flattened seventh and the blue note is a bended note of despair sung by the people in the cotton fields".' He laughs uproariously. 'Then the blues went up the river to Chicago and Kansas City.' You know how they talk!

'Duke said, "The blues is the accompaniment to a man and a woman going steady. And if neither of them wants to sing the blues, the blues just vamps until they are ready." He guffaws again. 'You know, they asked Duke, how would you like to record with John Coltrane? Duke said, that would be an unmitigated gas.'

Abdullah practically collapses on the floor with laughter. 'Duke, man,' he gasps. 'Oooooe, he was fantastic!'

HOME

Ekaya, Abdullah Ibrahim's new LP, brings us full circle. Named after a southern African word that means 'home', Ekaya has for him a special significance which he explains in a poem on the LP sleeve.

And so, after three hundred years, we met again -
Far from our ancestral home -
(Bear in mind/THE CREATOR HAS DESIGNED)
On the autumnal shores of this other continent...
And rebuilt our cosmic dwelling - EKAYA!!!
The spirit of Africa.

► continued from page 21

VITAL FORCE

Barry Guy's current commitments continue to straddle the areas of classical and improvised music, including a duo with Jane Manning, work with the West Square Electronic Music Ensemble, Capricorn, John Harle's Berliner Band, the Orchestra of St John's Smith Square, the Academy of Ancient Music and the City of London Sinfonia (for whom he recently wrote a bass concerto).

He continues to work with Paul Rutherford and Phil Wachsmann in Iskra 1903, in Evan Parker's trio and quartet with Paul Lytton and Kenny Wheeler (or Mark Chagig), in the Supersession quartet with Eddie Prevost, Evan Parker and Keith Rowe and is interested in exploring a trio with Evan Parker and Jamie Muir.

But he remains most passionate about that body in which the two elements of composed and improvised music coalesce - the London Jazz Composers' Orchestra.

'I would hate to lose it now; I think the LJCO has tremendous possibilities, there's tremendous potential, and all the guys

*Time has only changed the manner of our speech
- The language of our souls remain -*

It is here, in the spirit of Africa, that his music has its roots. Shaped by his Islamic faith and by his commitment to the ANC, Ibrahim's jazz works as a spiritual politics, drawing on the unique power of beauty and gentleness. It is a music alive with paradox and emotion, potent with a magic that battles apartheid like Archie Shepp's famous cry of 'Let my notes be bullets!': a music to and from the heart, that speaks 'the language of our souls'.

Time flies by. As we take our leave, Abdullah bumps our foreheads and wishes us well. He's a remarkable man: ANC freedom fighter, Muslim guru, inspired musician. He's also a man of great warmth, charm and humour. I tell you, talking to Abdullah Ibrahim is an unmitigated gas.

ABDULLAH IBRAHIM: SELECTED DISCOGRAPHY

(Note: many of these records appear under the name Dollar Brand)

- The Dream* - Trio, rec. 1965 (Black Lion)
- Confluence/Hamba Khale* - Duo with Gato Barbieri, rec. 1968 (Black Lion/Alfani)
- African Piano* - Solo, rec. 1969 (Japo)
- Ancient Africa* - Solo, rec. 1972 (Japo)
- Third World - Underground* - Trio, rec. 1972 (Trio)
- Sangoma* - Solo, rec. 1973 (Sackville)
- African Portraits* - Solo, rec. 1973 (Sackville)
- Memoirs* - Solo, rec. 1973 (Nippon Phonogram/West 54)
- African Sketchbook* - Solo, rec. 1973 (Enja)
- African Space Programme* - Big band, rec. 1973 (Enja)
- Good News From Africa* - Duo with Johnny Dyani, rec. 1973 (Enja)
- African Herbs/Souffle* - Small groups, rec. 1975-76 (The Sun/Bellaphon)
- The Children of Africa* - Trio, rec. 1976 (Enja)
- Black Lightning* - Small groups, rec. 1976 (Bellaphon)
- Mannenberg - Is Where It's Happening* - Small group, rec. 1976 (The Sun)
- The Journey* - Big band, rec. 1977 (Chiaroscuro)
- Streets Of Consciousness* - Duo with Max Road, rec. 1977 (Baystate)
- Autobiography* - Solo, rec. 1978 (Planisphere)
- Africa Tears And Laughter* - Quartet, rec. 1979 (Enja)
- Echoes From Africa* - Duo with Johnny Dyani, rec. 1979 (Enja)
- African Marketplace* - Big band, rec. 1979 (Elektra)
- At Montreux* - Quartet, rec. 1980 (Enja)
- South African Sunshine* - Solo, rec. 1980 (Planisphere)
- Natsido* - Solo, rec. 1980 (Planisphere)
- Duke's Memoirs* - Quartet, rec. 1981 (Enja)
- African Dawn* - Solo, rec. 1982 (Enja)
- Zimbabwe* - Quartet, rec. 1983 (Enja)
- Ekaya* - Small group, rec. 1983 (Ekapa)

want something magical to happen. We get good results, we get powerful results sometimes (I would say often now) but there is another hurdle. What's over it, I don't know. But I do know that once we're over there it's going to be absolutely extraordinary.'

There can be little doubt that given sufficient support and playing opportunities the LJCO is capable of achieving those extraordinary musical results of which Guy speaks. The indicators are there: a gripping short-notice concert recently at the Place in London, and the wonderful hearing, organic recordings just released under the title *Stringer* by FMP/SAJ. They have already acquired for themselves a unique voice favourably comparable with those of the Globe Unity Orchestra and Bley-Mantler's JCO in the States (and latterly Bley's touring orchestras), managing to achieve this with only a fraction of the support offered to either.

The final word must belong to Guy: 'The improvised music scene is a more vital force than anything else I know in terms of Western contemporary music. And the LJCO, and its area of activity, is actually as important as that of the London Sinfonietta in terms of dealing with large-scale compositions.'

Kenneth Ansell

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LETTER

Dear Wire,

I welcome Val Wilmer's important comments in issue six of *The Wire*.

I disagree, however, with her statement that in Britain 'the "jazz" world is totally disconnected from the mainstream of radical events'. For example, in recent years I've met musicians on the picket line outside the inquest into Blair Peach's murder, and other Anti-Nazi League activities; a demonstration to save the Elizabeth Garrett Anderson women's hospital, and the recent miners' solidarity demonstration through London. Also, many unemployed younger musicians have at some stage played with the Fallout Marching Band at CND demonstrations.

In the instance she mentions - the tribute to the murdered poet Michael Smith - I confess to being ignorant. All I can discover is that his alleged assassins were supporters of the CIA-backed Jamaican government. I know nothing of Michael Smith's work or views nor, for that matter, Amiri Baraka's recent work and views. Val should have told us more.

Of course the spirit of the music she writes about is - among other things - more than simply 'a statement of racial pride' in a narrow nationalist sense, but a statement and celebration of the human struggle for freedom from the class, race and gender-divided society which capitalism imposes on us *all* (though we may not all recognize it).

It is important to stress the progressive nature of black nationalism and it is important for us all to make the connections with our own struggles. And - yes - there weren't enough 'jazz' faces on those demonstrations, and I've also left out the ones that I missed.

Yours fraternally,

Mike Hames

We welcome your comments, suggestions, criticisms.

Send us your letters - we read them *all*.

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2. Actual; Backnell & Capital on Camera; Affinity Records; Carla Bley; Eric Dolphy discography Part I; Slim Gaillard; Ganelin Trio; Keith Jarrett; Charles Mingus; Rip Rig & Panic; Phil Seamen; Seven Steps - Alto; John Stevens Part II; Sonny Stitt tribute; Keith Tippett.

3. Albert Ayler; Sidney Bechet; Eubie Blake tribute; Eric Dolphy discography Part II; Bill Evans; Festivals on Camera - Gerard Rouy; Percy Grainger; Don McIllynn - film producer; George Russell Part I; Paul Rutherford; Seven Steps - Piano; Archie Shepp; Weather Report.

4. Blue Note Covers; Channel 4's Jazz; Don Cherry; Festivals III; FMP; Coleridge Goode; Joe Harriott; Earl 'Fatha' Hines; New York's Soundscape; George Russell Part II; Seven Steps - Tenor; Pat Smythe; Muddy Waters tribute; Urban Sax.

5. John Cage; Lol Coxhill; Buddy Guy; Mole Jazz; Annette Peacock; Howard Riley; George Russell Part III; Seven Steps - Guitar; Art Tatum; Stiff Tracey.

6. Albert Ayler; American Minimal Music; Miles Davis - Kind of Blue; Fred Frith; Philip Glass; Hog Records; Lee Konitz; Alexis Korner tribute; Harry Miller tribute; Sun Ra; Lester Young.

7. John Cassavetes; Ganelin Trio reviews reviewed; Jan Garbarek; Billie Holiday; Iron Curtain Jazz; Parker Dial sessions; Seven Steps - Drums.

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The cover photograph of Billie Holiday in issue 7 of *The Wire* should have been credited to The Max Jones Collection, and showed Billie in the Forties (not, as captioned, the Fifties).

All pictures of the Ganelin Trio (pages 15 and 16) should have been credited to photographer Nick White.

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